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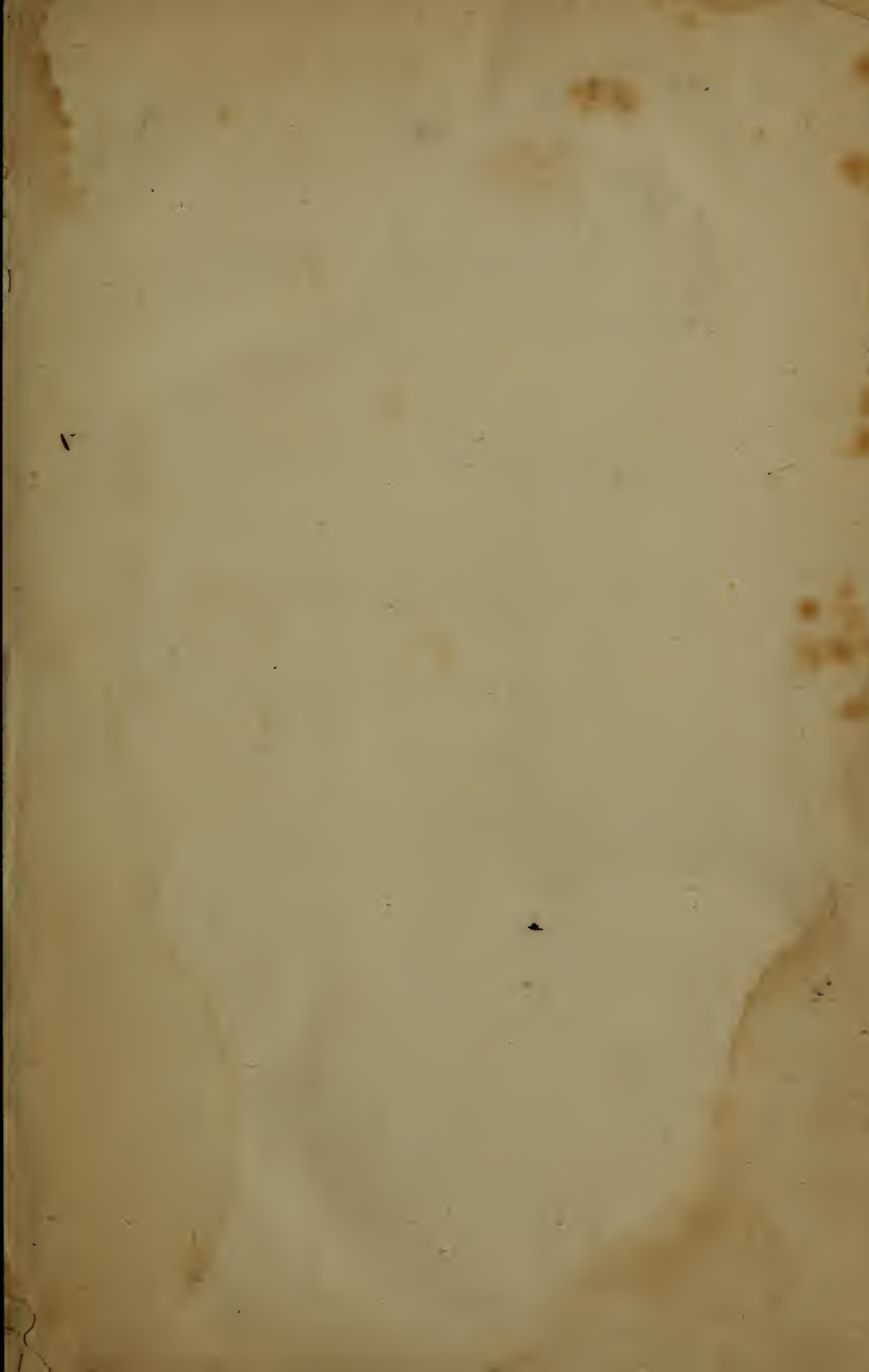
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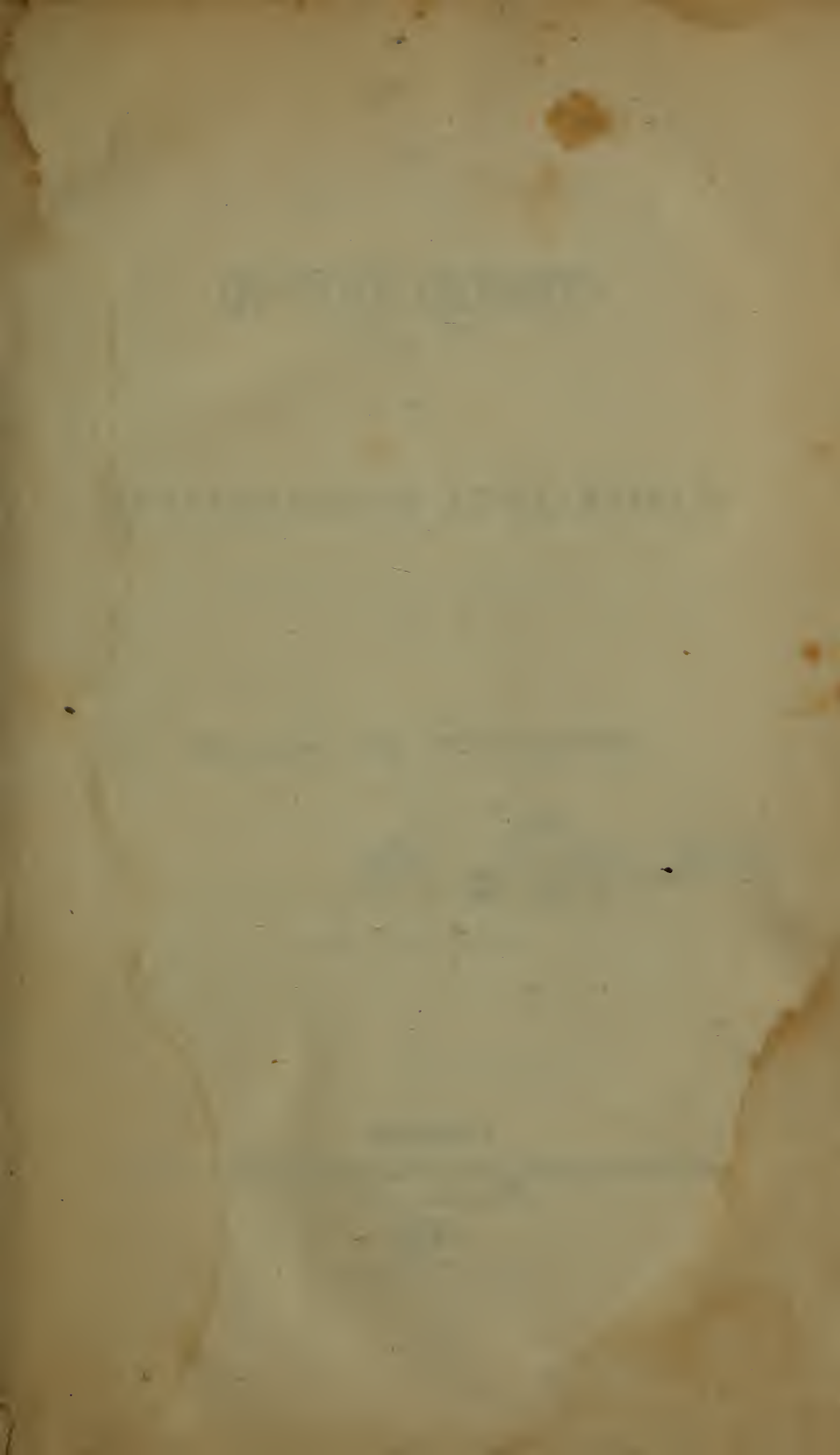
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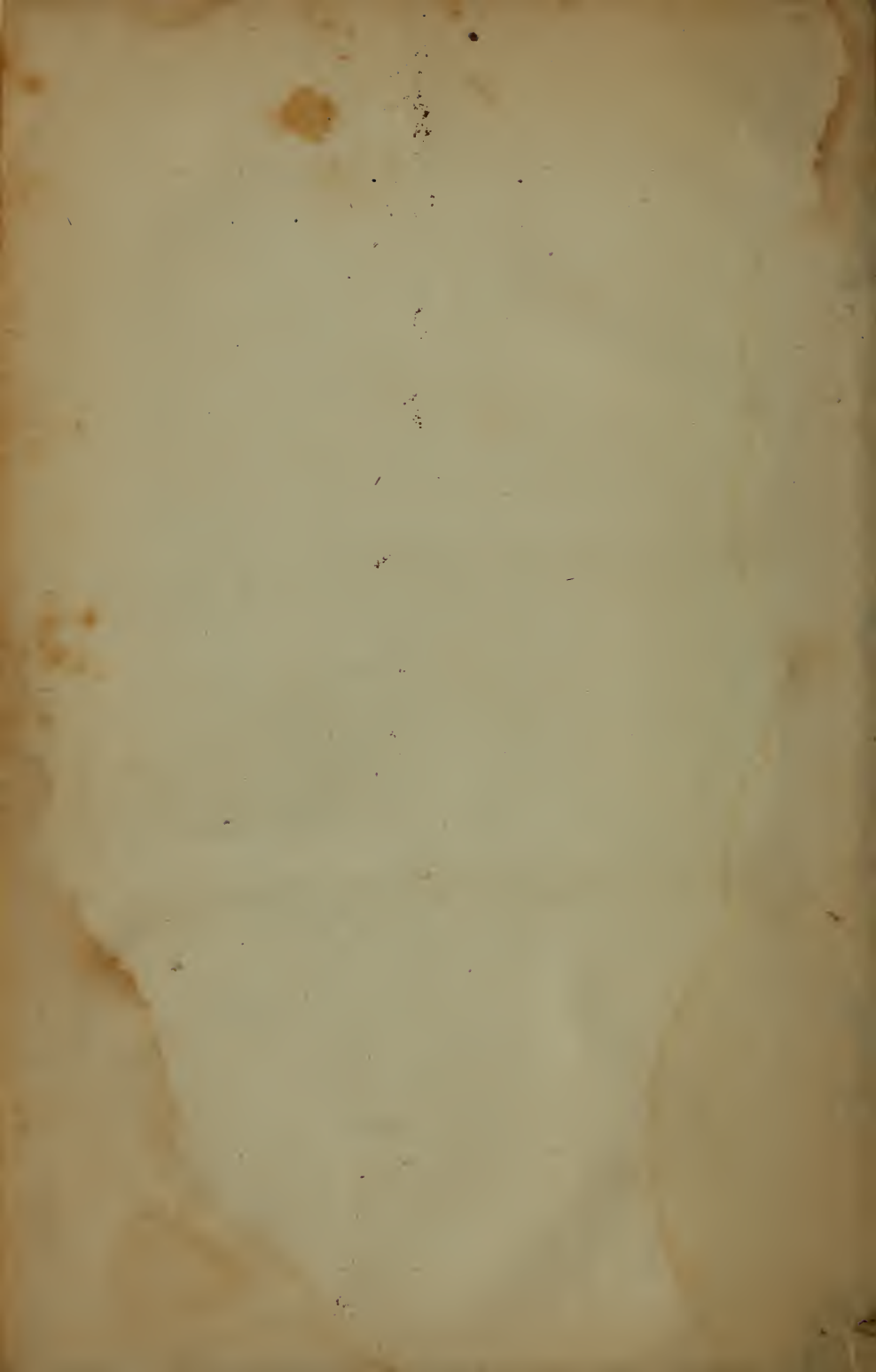
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**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.**









THE

QUODDY HERMIT:

OR

CONVERSATIONS AT FAIRFIELD

ON

RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION.

*W. Fitzwilliam*

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BOSTON:

PRINTED BY S. N. DICKINSON, 52 WASHINGTON STREET.

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1841.



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# ADDRESS.

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READER: My friend ACADEMICUS has prevailed on me to read these "Conversations" over, which he says he means to publish, rather by way of introduction to more elaborate matter, in which he intends to treat of that all-absorbing subject,

THE APPROACH  
OF  
OUR LORD'S KINGDOM,  
OR HIS  
PERSONAL REIGN ON EARTH.

In this view and prospect, I think these Conversations good, so far as they go. By thinking people, they will be read with advantage.

WM. FITZWILLIAM,  
*of Fairfield.*

REVISED

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various offices of the Board of Directors of the Bank of the City of New York, for the year ending on the 31st day of December, 1854.

President

and

Directors

are

John A. Dix, John B. Allen, John C. Smith,

John D. Jones, John E. Brown, John F. White,

John G. Black, John H. Green, John I. Gray,

John K. Hill, John L. Young,

John M. Adams,

John N. Baker.

## CONVERSATIONS AT FAIRFIELD,

TOUCHING THE POINTS, ON WHICH DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS OPINIONS NOW EXIST, THUS CAUSING THE DIVISION OF CHRISTIANS INTO VARIOUS SECTS. THESE CONVERSATIONS ARE DESIGNED TO SUGGEST MEANS FOR RESTORING THE SAID SECTS TO UNITY OF SPIRIT AND THE BOND OF PEACE, AND AS FAR AS MAY BE, TO MUTUAL CONSISTENCY OF PRACTICE.

~~~~~  
The parties were all Laymen.  
The Hermit of Fairfield, in North America.  
Theophilus, Rusticus, Academicus, and others occasionally.

~~~~~  
*Introduction at the house of the Hermit, in the Village of  
Fairfield, Maine.*

### FIRST CONVERSATION.

HERMIT. To whatever accident I may owe your visit, Gentlemen, I am glad to see you, and you are the more welcome, as, by your appearance, I perceive you are strangers to these wild parts of the world. I am told by neighbor Freeborn, who directed you here, because you appeared to have no business but amusement, that you seemed to be great travellers: if so, I shall be overpaid by your conversation for such petty offices of hospitality as, by God's blessing, I may be enabled to render you.

THEOPHILUS. Your neighbor has rightly informed you; my friend Rusticus, and Academicus, and myself, have been engaged some time, in visiting for information, to increase knowledge, different parts of Europe; and if you still take any interest in this world's affairs, whilst your neighbors seem to think you are preparing to leave it, we shall be glad to give such an account of ourselves as may increase your interest in us.

But for my part, and I think my friends also participate in the feeling, I have a more selfish object. We hope rather to engage you to give us the advantage of your great reputed experience, which, we are told, you are never unwilling to impart in social conversation; indeed, this was the main purpose of our seeking an introduction to you, finding no accommodation for travellers in your village. Our only object in travelling is to improve our knowledge, for which purpose we have assumed the travelling names by which we have intruded ourselves on your notice. We have lately landed on this Continent, and desire to make this land of freedom, as it is called, the theatre of our researches; and principally, in the first instance, we desire to observe the working of Religion here, where in spiritual matters you are free as air, and seem to be divided into as many sects as individuals; to observe its effects on social intercourse, when perfectly freed from the shackles of ancient institutions, and of spiritual despotism. or priestcraft; and we have seized with avidity the occasion which the chapter of accidents, or rather of God's Providence, has furnished for making your acquaintance, who, we are told, have been all the world over, and have not left England, many years, for settlement in these wilds.

If, therefore, our company will not be burdensome, we would gladly avail ourselves of your hospitality, a liberty we should not have been bold enough to take, did not your neighbors say you are generally delighted with such chance visits of people from the old country.

RUSTICUS. It is very true, Mr. Hermit, this is our only excuse. But we hear that you declare it is one of the greatest kindnesses you can receive in this out-of-the-way place, to be visited by intelligent persons, who have no worldly business with you. We boast no extraordinary intelligence, but have no business of a worldly nature with any one, beyond the usual observances in human intercourse, and we are too glad to take advantage of such good people when we can; and we feel ourselves bound to make ourselves agreeable and as little burdensome as possible, for we are told, you will not accept any other consideration. Will our company, Mr. Hermit, for one week, too much incommode you?

HERMIT. Far from it, my friends; whoever may have done me the kindness to report my sentiments, have fairly done so. Therefore assure yourselves, that to me

you will be welcome for as long as you can make it agreeable to yourselves; our habits will lay you under no restraints by day; my disposable time for social conversation on any subjects not common-place, is after family worship, when the rest of my family have retired. From ten o'clock until three in the morning, I generally am quite free to amuse myself with my books: at nine in the morning we meet to worship and breakfast. We dine at four, and assemble for tea in the evening, about seven o'clock. If these our habits are agreeable to you, you are welcome as long as you please.

ACADEMICUS. In offering my most sincere thanks for your proffered hospitality, I have to assure you, that your habits are too congenial to those which I acquired at college, not to be perfectly agreeable to me; and in this land of frost and snow, where are no philosophical rural retirements, no summer-houses, grottoes, arbors, parks, lawns, &c. &c. which sound well in song—Here, I say, my companions will, with me, delight in the comfortable evening room, good log-fire, and a social companion, particularly one whose travels and experience promises to furnish a continued repast of mental varieties.

HERMIT. I know not that I can furnish any delicacies in this way, but trust you will have brought some stores of this sort with you, on which I may draw freely. I repeat, we dine at four, for an hour; tea and a family rubber 'till nine, scripture reading and worship until ten, when I shall be your humble servant until two or three o'clock. So good day for the present; it is not yet noon, you will have time to look round you.

THEOPHILUS. These habits are indeed somewhat extraordinary for this part of the world. Our Hermit is certainly, neither a fanatic, an ascetic, nor a recluse; we were indeed led to imagine that he was somewhat of an enthusiast. It does not seem so, and our prospect is by so much the more agreeable.

ACADEMICUS. Let us then arrange, to make the most profitable use of our time. I purpose to engage our host to give us some account of the different religions and superstitions he has noticed. Are we agreed that this shall be our first subject of conversation?

THEOPHILUS and RUSTICUS. Quite agreed.

The day having passed as such days usually do, about ten in the evening, Academicus, Rusticus, and Theophilus, found themselves seated in a small room, the table

furnished with cigars, whiskey and water, the chimney with a good log-fire, and the room with various maps, and some books, evidently chosen from a larger collection.

ACADEMICUS. Truly our good old host, as you said, Theophilus, is no ascetic, nor misanthropist, but seems to have lived in the world, and to think it no sin to use God's good gifts, without abusing them, and with thankfulness. Altogether, this little snuggerly, so furnished, puts me quite in mind of mine at college, so that I feel myself quite at home.

THEOPHILUS. It is indeed very comfortable, and the old gentleman's welcome seems as free and familiar to him, as if it were an every-day scene, and not at all to put him out of his way, and leaving us quite at liberty to pursue our own. Rusticus, put another log on the fire; the whole scene invites us to feel ourselves at home and to make ourselves comfortable.

RUSTICUS. Yes, Academicus and I are quite prepared to show off our learning, if the cigars and whiskey do not make us forget our lesson. But I hear the Hermit coming; having set his house in order, I suppose he retires here to hold conversation with his forefathers and our's. I fear he will not find his present companions quite so sage.

HERMIT. Now, gentlemen, I am at your service (seating himself.) Every day with me is much like his immediate ancestor as possible, therefore you will have discovered, whether a few succeeding ones so spent will repay you for the sacrifice. Is there any thing else that you may require before you go to bed? for although I sit up, myself, late, yet my servants retire to bed immediately after evening prayers.

THEOPHILUS. We have every thing we can desire, Mr. Hermit, we thank you. I perceive by the books around the room that you converse much with Christian fathers. These new editions of them by the Oxford divines, are very creditable to them. You have perhaps considered the system of divinity which in their tracts they seem to advocate with much sincerity, piety, and learning. They have drawn upon themselves much animadversion and vituperation; to me it seems that they merit more consideration and charitable feeling, if not gratitude, although I am hardly prepared to give myself into their hands without some reserve; the school in which my name-sake and reputed ancestor was instructed by

Luke, the blessed physician and amanuensis to Paul, so far as I can judge, would hardly be recognized in their teaching, which seems to affect nothing earlier than the fourth century, and savors strongly of the philosophic gnosticism, absurd nummery, and factitious chastity and ceremonial sanctimoniousness, borrowed from Paganism, in those early days. But I should much like to hear your opinion of them, for by the volume in my hand, I perceive you have read them.

HERMIT. In days of old, before the art of writing was common, adventurers and travellers are said to have met on the great theatre of the world, much as we do here, under divine and providential guidance. On such occasions, as the first element of rational conversation, was some knowledge of each others' characters and pursuits, by which alone they could become qualified for such entertainment by familiar conversation, so they were said in general to have introduced themselves to each other by some compendious account of themselves and their adventures. Before this customary sacrifice of olden days has been offered, you have, by the very abruptness of your demand for my judgment on the most important subject which can engage a man's faculties, rather startled me. My opinion of the Oxford tracts does not so much differ from the same conclusions you seem to have come to, as now to require from me any further remark on them at this time, but I shall desire very much to discuss, in the course of our conversations, any particular doctrines they may appear to set forth. But not to evade your question altogether, even now, I may state in general, that their object seems to be, to impose a heavy yoke of spiritual despotism on us; against which, as evils, or methodisms of the devil, it is desirable for the furtherance of the gospel purposes, and true religion, that every Christian should guard himself against, and offer unceasing prayer to our Lord to avert. Romanism is a despotism of the spirit of Satan. Methodism is establishing a dominion over the minds of her votaries, began, as Romanism did, perhaps, in the pure spirit of the Lord, and to me seems likely to end in a similar despotism; and we ought the more to be on our guard against it, as being specially warned by Paul in Ephes. vi, 11, thus: "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the *methodisms* of the devil." You will observe the word which I have called "*methodisms*" is in our translation wiles; in the

Greek it is *methodias*, which I call *methodisms*. The French translate it *embuches*, meaning snares, or ambushes. The Portuguese make it *astutas citadas*, or cunning snares or ambushes. I think these tracts among these *methodisms*. I am not prepared, however, for a detailed examination of them; and pray, Theophilus, is it not somewhat unreasonable to draw so heavy a bill at sight, on the acquaintance of an hour?

THEOPHILUS. In truth, good host, it is — and in excuse I can only plead the disease of this country, curiosity, unbounded by European delicacy in the choice of subjects, however personal they may be, or whether embracing subjects which strangers seldom venture on, even on the notions we may have on religion. But, in truth, we had been preparing ourselves for a subject deeply interesting to us all, but hardly knew how to come at it in regular course of conversation, which might perhaps lead very wide of our mark; I came to the subject, as it seemed fairly to suggest itself by the character of the books around us. But I observe by the few remarks you have made, that before you offer any observations of your own, you would be introduced to your new acquaintance, and know so much of each of us as may furnish you means of avoiding such remarks as might offend our particular prejudices, supposing that as all men seem to have some such, so we may — and I thank you for the means you have furnished me to make fair amends for my first inconsideration, which your easy and unstudied manner of meeting our wishes, and indeed forestalling them, has rather betrayed me into, for I could hardly fancy myself a stranger to you, and almost imagined we had been acquainted with each other all our lives.

To meet a suggestion of yours, founded on the customs of bygone days, I will, without further preface, give you a short account of myself, which I do the more willingly, as a tribute to the frank and truly hospitable manner in which you have received us. Not that we can encourage you to hope for the scripture reward suggested as a reason for hospitality to strangers, "That some of old have thus entertained angels unawares." Such however as your guest Theophilus is, he will endeavor to tell you in as few words as may be.

Whether my ancestor were the very man of my name to whom Luke addressed his history of our Lord and the apostles, I cannot say, but it seems certain that in



the earliest days of the church, one of that name accompanied a mission to form churches in the British isles, where for some centuries they seem to have flourished, and to have been the seats of piety and learning, and in one family we have a well-authenticated tradition that the name has been kept up in every generation, supposed to be about sixty since that time. I am a Welshman, and not a little proud of this my ancestry. Those of our name in the family, have ever been dedicated to the ministry of the gospel, and my studies have been finished with this view. Firmly persuaded myself of the apostolic origin of this office in our family, and no less so, of the evangelical purity of our doctrines, you will not be surprised to hear, that I am a son of the Episcopal church of England, and as devotedly attached to her as a child to his own mother. Before I enter into orders, however, my father has desired that I see the way the gospel works in other countries of Christendom, and in other sects of Christians; he has charged me to commune with all who profess to believe in Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, God over all blessed for ever, but carefully to abstain from all intimate intercourse with all such as openly deny our Lord, in this divine character, in all its fulness, but never to neglect communion with Episcopalians; and I confess myself not a little disappointed in not finding among your very numerous meeting-houses for public worship, one Episcopalian church in all the northern part of this State, on this side of Bangor.

My companions and myself are attached to each other by our pursuits being so far similar, as having for their end the acquisition of knowledge by our own experience. In religion, however, we may be said to be subject, each to his own views, whether the result of prejudice or education; my friend Rusticus has not kept the records of his family quite so far back, and the legitimacy of some of his ancestors is more than doubted; and Academicus, who disputes every thing, does not appear to have made up his mind to any explicit rule of faith. We have known each other from our youth, and are all equally desirous to study the truth, without regard to our individual opinions, and to debate our views when diverging widely from each other, (when means offer for doing so dispassionately,) in presence of a moderator to overrule and guide us. Though not quite sure of Academicus' real faith, we all seem to agree that the gospel history is true,

and consequently that our Lord was God and man. So far agreed, we have travelled far, over Christendom in Europe; two years have elapsed since we sat out, and we have not yet quarrelled once. We seize the occasion, all of us, with ardor, of enjoying your society, who have the reputation of being learned in the subject, and we do all pray you to assist us in an inquiry into the right means of discriminating between religion and superstition.

ACADEMICUS. Our friend Theophilus has left Rusticus and myself, very little to say. My story shall be short. I am the son of a country gentleman in England, descended from a noble family. I declare myself to be in pursuit of the truth, and claim freedom to discuss all dogmas and doctrines, being sure the freest inquiry will rather serve to establish than to injure the truth, and Theophilus has rightly described me as floating on the waves of the world, questioning all opinions, and myself holding none exclusively. I do not deny the truth of the Bible history, nor the divinity of our Lord, but I should like to be much better satisfied of both, by such arguments as are incontrovertible, which surely can be found, if they be the truth, and if once found, there could then be no room for sectarian difference. Although I hold myself free to think, yet am I no freethinker, in the usual sense of the word. My friends sometimes accuse me of being a skeptic; but I can assure you, Mr. Hermit, I am no minute philosopher, and I really have so poor an opinion of my own judgment, that in common with my two friends, I hope to leave your cottage much wiser than I entered it, in which I feel justified by your own frankness and obliging easy manners, and by the evidence I see around me that you are used to converse with much better company.

RUSTICUS. Mr. Hermit, my friends have left me little to say for myself. I am the son of a Scotch farmer, of the good old kirk — a Presbyterian by birth and education. I am content, so far, to take my creed on trust, therefore am I no five-point Calvinist. I delight, however, to hear reasonable discussions on the peculiarities of all sects, and should be glad to strengthen my faith by reason. I find the orthodox churches here, so much resemble our own, that I am more at home than my friends, but hope, with them, to derive much instruction from your experience and indulgence.

HERMIT. Your ingenuousness charms me, my friends,

and, as in my view also, the subject is most interesting to us all, and as you seem all to be on the side of truth and reason, I do not despair that, however we may differ in the beginning, we may, by the aid of reason and truth, agree in our profession before we part, and if so, that we may offer an example which may serve, in some measure, to show the way of removing the disgusting spectacle of the thousand differing sects of christians from the face of Christendom, in which career there is a very able man now also engaged, Mr. Isaac Taylor, author of the successive works called the Natural History of Enthusiasm, Fanaticism, Spiritual Despotism, and Ancient Christianity; the last is now in the course of publication, and I hope sincerely, that the results of your experience, all of you, but of Theophilus more particularly, may enable you to assist him in his reasonable, pious, and learned labors, when you return to our beloved country, blessed by God above all the nations on earth—the nursery of the arts and sciences, and the last asylum of true religion and liberty. I say of Theophilus in particular, because he has offered a remark on the Oxford theology, as set forth in their tracts. In ancient christianity they are fairly met on their own grounds, and with their own weapons, and are treated with the respect and christian love due to their learning, piety, and sincerity. Let us not, however, enter too hastily on discussion, before I have paid the debt due to you all, by giving you such an account of the Quoddy Hermit, as may place us on an equal footing as to our present opinions. For my actual attainments, I must confess to you, that the best fruits of my experience are the certain knowledge of my own ignorance; with this knowledge I dare affect no peculiar wisdom, but have little doubt that our conversations may improve the little I have; and as my story will be a little longer than yours, we will not begin it to-night. You have hardly had time to conform yourselves to my habits, and my time has expired; therefore, if you will take any thing before you retire, pray help yourselves. You know your own rooms; good night, may God bless you.

## THE SECOND CONVERSATION.

*The three Travellers and the Quoddy Hermit.*

HERMIT. My friends, I will not inquire how you have amused yourselves this day, neither how you have slept last night; for I presume if anything were wanting to your convenience, comfort or ease, within our means, you would speak. The mere concerns of this world I shall not inquire about further than may be necessary to enable me to fulfil the object of your travels, which, by your account of yourselves, has much more of a spiritual than temporal end in view. What you want, you will ask for, and if within our means to supply, we will gladly minister; if not, we will say so.

RUSTICUS. Your arrangements forego all our wants and wishes, so far as our temporal wants. We shall take advantage of your hospitality to ask for what we may require, if anything further than what already seems provided for, shall occur. But Mr. Hermit, we are all of us much impatient to hear something of a life, which must have been full of event, and on this subject your neighbors all seem entirely ignorant; for we have inquired, and have learnt nothing of your history, and but little of your opinions.

HERMIT. A life which may be considered as having attained the usual period of a man's race; of which sixty years have been spent on the theatre of the great world, although the person be without renown, yet not unknown, must contain much that would be interesting to rehearse; but our object now is confined, I conceive, to Religion and Superstition. My neighbors, who are used to con found the things for which these are the names, know indeed but little of my views. Nevertheless, they can plead no excuse for such ignorance, for I read them, or to such of them as choose to attend, at least two lectures every week, (for sometimes we have more,) from unexceptionable divines, yet so modified as to contain all that is expedient to explain of my peculiar opinions. I say all that is expedient to explain, because seeing much to disapprove in all religious establishments that I am intimate with or know at all, I do not feel myself at liberty to set up my own notions against received opinions, sanctified by time and our fathers — and am too conscious of my own ignorance to presume to set an undue value on my views, or to set myself up for a teacher of some new sect.

If I were to proclaim myself so mad or so foolish, I should have followers enough, if I would demand pay; for these people look with great suspicion on any offices, however good and serviceable to them intended to be, if they are purely gratuitous. Now as I am bold enough to offer them the water of life freely, in the name of the Lord, without money and without price, and thus appear to set no monied value on these things, and as every thing here is brought to a monied standard — so these people at once jump to the conclusion, that what costs nothing is worth nothing, and cannot profit; and therefore you will not be surprised to learn, that I cannot boast of one disciple. And if, my worthy guests, you have been long enough in this hemisphere to have been bitten with this American mania, you will esteem but little, any thing you will hear from me; for you must consent to hear them at no cost to yourselves but your patience. As mammon then has had no part in my speculation in morals or religion, you will be justified in considering as little worth, what I myself set so little value upon.

**THEOPHILUS.** We observed your chapel, and asked to what denomination it belonged — and was surprised that nobody seemed to know; they called it simply the church, and I did hope that it was Episcopal, but some called it the Hermit's Church. Pray, Mr. Hermit, who officiates there?

**HERMIT.** I fear if I were to undertake to satisfy your curiosity on these lesser subjects, we shall not make much progress with the main question, but perhaps having learnt the low estimate at which I value all I can say to you on any subject, you will be better pleased to limit my communications to such subjects as may have arrested your immediate curiosity.

**ACADEMICUS.** Not so indeed, Hermit. You must excuse Theophilus; he found himself suddenly mounted on his favorite hobby, Episcopus, and he would soon have carried him full tilt to Rome, and perhaps have landed him a little out of breath at Jerusalem, and perhaps in the Temple itself. As to that species of hydrophobia, (what costs nothing is worth nothing) which is peculiarly American, and more particularly Down-Eastern, as we have been here long enough to learn, we really do esteem it right-down anti-English and devilish, and therefore in the name of all I pray you, Hermit, begin your story. Indeed, with the freedom of frank fellowship I would

claim our right to it, for we have paid and you have received the full price set upon it by yourself.

HERMIT. You are quite right, Academicus, and therefore, if it be interesting enough to keep you awake, listen.

I am the bastard son of a man of little note, which by depriving me of many advantages in the way of earthly parentage, has given me the inestimable advantages of enjoying in a very marked degree the heavenly parentage of God's special providence. An orphan, a bastard, a foundling, I have never felt the want of earthly parents, because God himself provided for me; I do not mention the broad fact of degraded and mean origin, with a view to uncover the nakedness of my parents; but it is probable that the peculiar train of my spiritual research, and many the most important events of my life, have resulted from the accident of my illegitimate birth. And some really interesting reflections on the state of society in Christendom naturally suggest themselves; and as your ancestors, Theophilus, will, as we pursue our inquiry, be found, I think, to have been the means of introducing under the usurped authority, (as of our Lord,) some most grave errors, you will please to note this observation for abstract discussion, in its proper place.

THEOPHILUS. Certainly, Mr Hermit, I shall do so, and I confess, the charge you have made against my ancestors does appear most grave, indeed. I have indeed been used to regard all their acts with filial and profound reverence; and to suffer any abatement of this feeling would cause me some pain, and much disappointment. Nevertheless, we are decided to bear record to the truth only, and my very best feelings may, from the nature of human affections, be tinctured by superstitious reverence for persons whose memory is so dear to me, which is, as agreed, a part of our present inquiry.

HERMIT. This item being noted for future discussion, let us proceed with our history. At five years of age, I may be said to have become conscious of my existence, and found myself an inmate of the artillery barracks in a besieged town, and the first repast that I remember was off a horse's head, for our enemies had cut off all foreign supply of food. In this state I have been informed that an officer of rank met me at play on the ramparts with other soldier's children, and being struck with my features, exclaimed, "That's a boy of my friend Lamb, I'll swear. What's your name?" "Will!" "What

else?" "I don't know—but if you want to know you may ask in the barracks! Mother can tell you!" This I have on the authority of the same officer, with whom I found myself embarked next day on board a frigate—and then learnt, that I really had had an earthly father, an officer also, but he was dead—and that I had parted with my mother never again to hear of her. Thus early in life I found myself without parents, and now cannot but see and gratefully acknowledge the extraordinary providence by which friends were raised to supply the place of earthly parents. The ordinary providence of God Almighty is I believe almost universally acknowledged, but the extraordinary or special providence which is exemplified in particular individuals of our race, — I think in all—is often considered as a superstitious notion, which therefore will fall under our notice for discussion. About this time I learnt that there was a being said to be in the skies, called God, and the notion I received of him was that represented in the picture of the fable of Hercules and the Carter, and I was persuaded by a parcel of boys of my own age, once to fancy that I really saw such a vision, so early do impressions, whether of religion or superstition, take possession of the young mind. I really cannot say at what age I obtained clearer notions of a spiritual world, but remember well that my first lesson at a public school in Scoldvale, (the then metropolis of North Wales,) in the Testament, was "Jesus wept," and at the next verse for my repetition, my span-new Testament was hove at my head, for being a dunce, and got soiled in some of the leaves, on the floor, much to my grief and mortification. Here I was put out to board with the writing-master, and almost starved; by God's providence a butcher's wife was raised up to save me from impending miserable death, and at seven years old, I found myself an inmate in the family of a widow, with five young children, a farmer, whose husband had lately hung himself, where the plenty of the land was before me. Here, by the grandmother of the house, we were all on bare knees made to repeat the Lord's prayer every night at eight o'clock, and were then dismissed to bed for twelve hours. The course of instruction at this place, called Bridge-ford, was that of a common parish day-school, where the cost for each was one shilling for a quarter of a year, and sixpence for winter's fires. Here I was taught to say the Catechism and learn some Collects by rote,—to attend church regularly, read the

alternate verses in the Psalms, and all Orthodox christian teaching, — and once or twice was subjected to public catechising during Lent, in one year. But no pains whatever were taken to instil into my mind any sane, spiritual instruction, so that my mind was left to satisfy these cravings, as natural to humanity as those for food, to the superstitious legends of ghosts, goblins, and robbers, the evening's recreations of a country fire-side; but of the wholesome truths of the Gospel I never heard but in church — except now and then in some good old trite religious maxim, which the good widow put forth to teach us wisdom. Whilst here, I became a prey to a scrofulous disease — the supposed result of a sudden transition from starvation to plenty, which lasted seven or more years. My friend, the officer, who recovered me when lost and unknown, rather attributed this disease to a visitation of God, for the licentiousness of my father. It seemed, however, rather inherent in the family of my mother. These opinions have a relation to the subject in hand, and therefore I trust Academicus will note those points for discussion hereafter. I hope, my friends, I am not tedious, but it seemed necessary to trace out the course, by which I have attained to my knowledge, which no doubt you will find as shallow as the means of acquiring it were simple.

But I must not omit one circumstance that occurred when about ten years old, as marking the extent of my spiritual attainments at that age. I shall not take up your time here, by moralizing on the events of my youth. I relate now only the facts, without remarking on those properties of human nature, which in our earliest years develop themselves for good or for evil. An insatiable desire to pry or look into hidden or secret things, called curiosity, first caused the fall of man; and in the children of man, this propensity is inherent. All that I could know at ten years old of the spiritual world, was acquired in the method of vague, vagrant, old women's fables and legends; for although I read at school some parts of the Bible as they occurred in my lessons, I neither understood the language, nor the object of those readings. So also I heard sermons at church, joined in the service, and knew the forms of proceeding in worship. Yet was I almost in utter ignorance of a spiritual world — except as a subject which always occasioned awe and dread, whenever mentioned. No minister of religion, no, nor any person whatever, ever spoke of God's government of



this world, of hell, death, the devil, ghosts and angels, or if they did, they spoke of them as of secret things, hidden mysteries, not to be spoken of — and by none understood. Among the old women's fables, I had heard of raising the devil; of some fool-hardy people who made bargains with him — how he was to be cheated, how defied — that he could not come to us if we repeated the Lord's prayer; nor could he enter into a church. How it entered into my heart, I know not — but once on a time at church, with a maid-servant, it occurred to me that I would puzzle the devil, by saying the Lord's prayer backwards, which I had been told was the way to raise him, for I supposed he could not come into church. But still, as I had been told the prayer itself could not be said backward, without being very wicked, which I was by no means disposed to be considered — therefore, looking at the end of the Psalms, for the Pater-noster in verse, I did mentally read it over in backward order, word by word, until within a very few words of its beginning, when suddenly I was possessed — the blood rushed to my face, and such a feeling came over me, as I cannot describe. This was what I did not expect; I did indeed look towards the church door with some fear, lest I should see some horned being peep in, to show that he had come at my bidding, and to await me when out of church. I need hardly say, I never did complete the charm, nor was I ever bold enough to presume so to trifle with holy things, after. It is very strange that, for some years after, I never could read, or indeed, look on the Pater-noster in verse, at the end of a prayer-book, but the same feeling overcame me; I cannot say how many years, but now believe five or six. When the church service was over, I was in great dread; I expected the devil was waiting for me at the door, and God knows how closely I clung to the petticoats of the maid for fear, as we issued from the old porch of the church. How I may have attempted to make my peace with God for this presumptuous wickedness, I do not exactly remember; but believe I repeated very soon, and often, the Lord's prayer the right way, and certainly with faith in its efficacy to undo any satanic spell.

ACADEMICUS. You were pleased, Mr. Hermit, to call my attention to a part of your story, relating, I suppose, to the visitation of the sins of the fathers on the children. But in truth, your whole story is most extraordinary; so

that I shall not attempt to note a part, but the whole — for I never in my life heard of circumstances in real life more appropriate to our present question. Religion and superstition seem so blended here, that I see we shall with difficulty discriminate. I fear, Mr. Hermit, you will have to board us a month instead of a week. Why, let me see, you are only ten years old yet.

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THIRD CONVERSATION.

*The parties being seated as usual before the log-fire; the Hermit had not finished his cigar. The conversation was begun by*

THEOPHILUS. The story of your own youth, or rather infancy, is so extraordinary and ultra-romantic, that for my part, I begin to regret that the abstract nature of our subject precludes the hope of any detail of your personal or worldly adventures. I must confess that my curiosity is very much excited; I could have interrupted you a dozen times to ask impertinent questions. But pray, kind Host, do not entirely suppress your adventures, for both my friends and self feel an uncommon interest in them.

RUSTICUS. Ay! insomuch as almost to lose all relish for the dry moral discussion; for my own part, if beggars may be choosers, I would rather not lose a single anecdote of a life so extraordinarily begun, whether they may bear on the pretty theme of Academicus or not.

HERMIT. Your feeling, my friends, is quite natural; you are just beginning your career, in this world; — worldly things have the greatest charm for you — and no doubt, like all young people of both sexes, would delight in a pretty story of real life, and particularly, if it had something of the wonderful in it — but generally, this appetite is something like the hunger of young beggars; they swallow every thing they can get hold of, which never rises on their stomachs, but does its work and passes into the draught of eternal oblivion. But with me, this day has gone by; I am become more dainty — spiritual food alone has now a charm for me, because I feel sensibly, that we all ought to be continually preparing ourselves for the parts which are to be allotted to us for eternity. This earth will, as promised, be still the stage or theatre — but our auditory, the intelligences

filling the broad expanse of the universe, to witness the glorious triumph of good over evil; after the contest which has endured now for nearly the six days of the moral creation, or the six thousand years of the physical creation, — a spectacle to angels and all the intelligences of the universe, angels and devils, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and those doomed to misery and wo. This world 's a stage, portraying materially and sensibly, scenes which either have been, are, or will be enacted in the spiritual world — and I now think it important to aim at qualifying myself to perform my spiritual part, which is real life — on the theatre of the broad expanse of the universe, as far exceeding in splendor, magnitude and magnificence, this little ball, as the heavens exceed the earth in magnitude, or as the real world, a puppet-show. I desire, my friends, to prepare seriously for the new birth in that world, of which this is but the stepping-stone. The incidents of this world, except in so far as they relate to that dispensation which is to follow, these have lost their charm, all their interest for me, except in so far as the religious and social duties, the fruition, exists only in prospect, in hope, and a firm faith in the blessed promises. When babies, we look not beyond the fountain which is appointed to nourish animal existence; when children, we have scarcely a thought beyond the doors of the family; in youth, our village or our school absorb our whole view; as adults, we commence our wordly career, and it absorbs all our energies; as men, our views take a wider range, more or less important; and in age our mind should embrace the universe and eternity. Now I am arrived at this point, I shall endeavor, nevertheless, to attend to the desires you have expressed, and shall occasionally, perhaps, indulge in some observations on education, which is nothing more than a preparation for performing the parts on the theatre of this world, which are allotted to us by the Great Master-manager of the drama, viz. even our Lord himself: I shall endeavor to proceed with my life and opinions.

The scrofulous disorder which attached to me, rendered me a Lazarus, and I was sent for three successive years, seventh, eighth and ninth, to the sea-coast of North Wales, for two of the summer months, and in these journeys I learnt some particulars of my family, if I could be said to belong to any. I was told I had an elder brother; some people called themselves my cou-

sins, and I began to discover that I had sprung from earthly parents. Yet before, and for some years after, when questioned about my father and mother, I was used to answer with all sincerity and simplicity, "I never had any,"—so that I was known at school, jocularly I suppose, until I was thirteen, as the boy that never had father or mother. About ten, however, I had a sensible mark of the earthly preëxistence of some one, who claimed to be my father; for I had a suit of scarlet and a cocked hat, said to have been made (the suit) from an old coat of my father's. I learnt too, that he had been an officer of some renown, mutilated like Nelson, by the loss of an arm and an eye, and like him, as brave as a lion, which he bore for his arms, although his name was Lamb; for his crest, an uplift arm, with a drawn sword, in the act of striking; and his chosen motto, "In defence of the weakest." In wordly reputation, by all who knew him, he was said to have been a noble fellow; but poor fellow, that arm which he had dedicated to heroic virtue, was severed from his body at the age of twenty-two or three, in the year 1759; a severe lesson in religious morals. Not a hundred years ago, he held a confidential situation in one of the Colonial Governments, and then received the grant of this estate, which he named Fairfield. He settled it, brought from England a colony of seventy persons, and among others my mother, who bore him a son here—since well known in the public service; having settled his colony to his liking, he returned; and about four years after, she bore me. My father left England on public service, whilst I was a baby in arms, and was killed. My cousins seized this property, which I have recovered from the last survivor of them by purchase. Thus far, in compliance with your desires.—Hereafter it will be necessary to say little of my family or self—except as to our subject. At the period of my life to which I attained last night, I had in the whole a more correct notion of God's government of this world, by the direct agency of his providence, than I had some years after. I supposed that I had attained to more perfect knowledge,—and above all, by the grace of God, I was disposed by the character he had impressed on me, to attach myself zealously to his service. I really did see my dependence on him, and was disposed to love him with all my heart. But of our Lord Jesus Christ, I had no other distinct idea, than that he was a good man—nor did I ever hear him spoken of,

but in the church service, or in oath, or execration. It was never my good fortune to hear his Godhead spoken of, much less explained. But I have omitted an anecdote, bearing on our question for discussion, which I will add in this place. I have said my father lost his right arm. It was in an action with the French, and in a foreign country. Lord Wealthy was his brother officer, but serving in another part far distant. On the night he lost his arm, Lord W. dreamt he saw him with his arm off and bleeding, and exclaimed, "Bless me, what's the matter, Lamb?" My father told him the circumstances of the case, nearly as they occurred. There was something in the dream peculiar, that made such an impression on Lord W. that he told it to about sixteen of his brethren in arms, at breakfast next morning, and moreover, made a minute of it in his pocket-book. The character of Lord W. had nothing of enthusiasm or fanaticism in it. All his life he remained a gentleman of easy manners, and those of a man of family and fashion of his day; a courtier. The connexion between him and my father had been one of such intimacy only, as arose out of their fellowship in arms and profession; he had a command in this country when my brother was born; became with the governor, his sponsors, and knew not that such a being as myself was born, when he met me on the ramparts of a besieged town, in the colonies, as I have before related, and thenceforth he charged himself with the care of the two orphans left by my father. Forty-four years after this event of the dream, I was dining at his table, with a set of his old friends, and it seems also of my father's; adventurers in the same war of 1756 to 1761. He was recounting stories of olden times, and I took the occasion to mention the story of the dream, as related, or rather recorded, by my father in his memoirs, written with his own left hand, and requested to know if it was correct. He was not aware, he said, that my father had so noticed it, nor had he often mentioned it since the time, but it was strictly true, he assured all his old friends, and that he had then in his house, the pocket-book in which he had noted the facts. This anecdote I mention as being a dream, and savoring a little of what must fall under our consideration, as superstition or religion, when we shall treat of these in the abstract. It seems now probable to me, that my whole walk in life, my brother's also, and that of a large family left by the same Lord W. in our care, have resulted from the im-

pression made by some of these and other extraordinary experiences. At this time such conclusions may be drawn from them safely, without suspicion of superstition.

**RUSTICUS.** The country of my fathers is, and has ever been a peculiar stage of fairy land, and these stories of your real life, bring me, by association, back to the days of my childhood, when my ears and head were crammed with tales of similar spiritual or fairy doings; and if I have any prejudice of education, it is this, that I believe them all, that do not embrace some manifest absurdity, and even where that may be the case, I believe they may be founded on some truth.

**HERMIT.** I rejoice that we are not all Sadducees; and one remark I have made in these days of alleged infidelity and undoubted skepticism,—that those persons who make it matter of conscience to speak always the truth, never reject fair testimony on any subject. The man who chooses to decide in his own mind, that whatever appears to him unnatural, extraordinary, or out of the usual course of his experience, must be a delusion, or a wilful perversion of truth,—such a man must have such a spirit within him, viz: of self-delusion, and wilful lying. But to proceed with my history, which we seem to be diverging from, and in some measure to be trespassing on the ground marked as a reserve. But thus far I beg you to bear with me, in compliance with your expressed desires.

At half-past ten I was placed in a school near Liverpool for the benefit of sea-bathing, for scrofula. I was still an ulcered Lazarus. My advance in learning was here marked by an unheard-of rapid progress, and I remained at this school until twelve years old. This two years of my career was filled with my most extraordinary adventures, out of which volumes, in the taste of these days, might be given, and I doubt not but they would excite interest enough to be very entertaining, the subject being known, that is, the old Hermit. But as applicable to the purpose before us, I shall relate only, that in the last half year of my residence at that school, I had two dreams on peculiar and unthought-of subjects, previously; in themselves they were of trifling import, but in each case I had rehearsed them to the whole school when at our breakfast on the morning following each dream, when in both cases they were strictly and literally fulfilled in the face of the whole twenty boys, immediately on the close of my rehearsing them.

The circumstances were trivial and of no importance in themselves, so that I was puzzled much to know what they could mean; for the circumstances were so strictly and literally predicted, as decided the communication to be from God Almighty. This I was convinced of, but I could not understand why God, who governed the whole world, should condescend to foretell a little school boy by dream, any thing at all, but particularly what appeared to me so trifling. The facts remained on my memory, but I believe I did not reason much on them at that time. Afterwards, when I turned my mind back to those dreams, which contained specific predictions fulfilled to the letter, I reasoned thus: they must have been sent to me by God Almighty himself, because no creature could know what was then to come to pass. Then why? I concluded thus: I stood alone, an orphan, neglected, diseased, not a friend as I supposed on earth, except my school-master, and to him I was a stranger; and may it not have pleased God to take this simple way of assuring me, that as I was under his eye, he regarded every thing about me, and would himself take care of me, as indeed he had hitherto almost miraculously. Having come to this sane conclusion, I have seen no reason to doubt its true end — now for fifty-five years — and I should, perhaps, find more pleasure in relating these things, if my own conduct in life had at all corresponded to such glorious patronage. I left that school at twelve, still a martyr to continued imposthumes. I believed myself to be one of the cleverest little fellows on earth, because my master and fellow boys thought so. I thought myself a favorite of God Almighty, — presumptuous, bold, adventurous, active, resolute and strong beyond my age, but a martyr, as I have said, to the scrofula, or King's evil. In my own fancy I was religious, according to form, but no man yet took any pains to explain any of the simple doctrines of our church, although our school-master was the curate of the parish. So I yet knew nothing of the real divine character of our Lord, God over all, and blessed for ever; and of the Bible and Testament we knew no more than was read in church, for the school was a grammar school, that is, to teach Latin and Greek, and let English, and morals, and religion come of course. I shall close this part of my story, by begging Academicus to note this period, from ten to twelve, for some observations on education, relative to pure morals; for my village education at Bridgeford had made an inroad on

the natural shame resulting from sexes ; little care was taken to preserve purity of private manners, so that decency in public were preserved ; and some little profligacy was considered rather as a trait not despicable, but sometimes worthy of imitation, as denoting advance to manhood. At the last school we were of all ages, from eighteen to nine or ten. The elder corrupted the younger, and masturbation or self-pollution was no uncommon vice, even among young men meant for the clergy, and was indeed little thought of as it ought to have been. In education I fear this subject is not sufficiently attended to.

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FOURTH CONVERSATION.

*The same Parties.*

THEOPHILUS. This winter seems to have set in early, and the weather may induce us all to rejoice, and be thankful that we are in good quarters ; to move seems impossible for the snow. If the days hang at all heavy on your hands, Mr. Hermit, we would gladly become your listeners for double lectures, or you will not have concluded them before the new year. And behold Christmas is not yet here — and you may wish our room, rather than such tame, yet costly company ; for sharp weather makes sharp appetites. However, we have determined not to interrupt you, and fear we have heretofore been rather ill-mannered in this particular. Do pray proceed with your story.

HERMIT. I was despatched by horse, near two hundred miles from school, behind a profligate footman, myself riding on the crupper, from Scoldvale to London, where I was lodged with a surgeon and physician. Lord Wealthy, it seems, was the secret director of my destiny. I had never seen or heard of him after I was six years old, until near fourteen. I was placed in medical hands, who filled me with mercury and disease, and took about one hundred and fifty pounds of my money, of my inheritance from my father. And I was more than a year at a mathematical academy, where my progress was as remarkable as it had before been in classics. Here our religious instruction consisted in going to church to talk with our fingers to the girls of a school, who used the adjoining pew. We heard no more about religion for the week ; and of morals we never heard a word. Self-



pollution, reckless profligacy, and drunkenness, were objects of emulation here. I profited as might be expected, but had a wonderful reputation, to the honor of the school, for my progress in learning.

At length, in 1788, I embarked with my father's friend, Lord Wealthy, as midshipman of a line-of-battle ship, and thus commenced a public life, which may be said to have had no sensible intermission until the close of 1831, or forty-three years, during which I have served under every naval man of renown, and was honored by the particular friendship of Nelson. From the year 1797, I have held commands, and been intrusted with some important services, for the most part in remote parts of the world. My character, if I may be allowed to draw it myself, contained much of good and bad; the latter, perhaps, I contrived to veil sufficiently not to mar my reputation, but by the grace of God, he has not left me without his spirit of self-conviction. The veil which I managed to interpose between my vices and the public view, also covered my estimable qualities; so that it is my belief the real character of few public men in my sphere have been more mistaken. My reputation for knowledge, talent and ability was high. The career of worldly ambition was fairly open to me; but this was too limited a career to satisfy me; the means of attaining an uncertain celebrity and influence were commonly in open enmity to virtuous emulation, and depended too much on prejudice, corrupt favoritism, family or party favor. Our ship had a chaplain, an old man, whose failings or vices brought him into contempt, and religion was a subject never spoken of, and I presume was little thought of; the subjects of emulation were mischief and drunkenness; by God's grace, religion was ingrafted in my nature; it could not be forgotten. It had been fostered by simple habits, sincerely respected—going to church regularly and the Lord's prayer at bed-time; but I would have blushed to have been caught at even this simple act of worship, or to have been detected even in its secret exercise.

But I was free from secret vices of any kind. Pride, and an extraordinary aptitude to exceed in whatever I undertook, spoiled me. In short, I had much of good and evil; if rightly trained I could have been made any thing; but no man had sufficient interest in me to undertake my proper guidance and instruction in my relative duties to God and to society. Before I was fifteen I was moved to a sloop of war, where salt diet brought on

a return of scrofula ; but I never heard a word of religion, and was still left the child of seeming chance. I now became acquainted with my elder brother, to whom Lord Wealthy had attended with the care of a parent ; and he repaid his care by unerring conduct. We, however, did not serve together until I was seventeen. At this age the career of vicious and sensual amusements was the only recreation to relieve a monotonous round of duties, unimportant, therefore uninteresting. On this career, too, I entered with as much zeal and avidity as I was used to display in all my pursuits, and became a profligate, and was chastened with disease even to the gates of death. By the Lord's mercy I was spared. At eighteen I heard the famous Dr. Hawker lecture and expound scripture. My whole soul responded, and no doubt if the Lord had left me in his hands I should have been overwhelmed with Calvinistic prejudice and error. My brother seemed studiously averse from spiritual and religious subjects, yet in worldly morals excelled, and was used to rally me on my religious propensity. The revolutionary war with France began, and in me a life of a modern sailor, whose amusements and recreations were all sensual and licentious. Indeed, seamen had no other resources. Unrestrained whoredom and profligacy was almost the necessary character of the profession, and I was never aware until very lately, that this system was among the fruits of the earliest heresies in Christianity. Theophilus will be kind enough to note this for some future comment, as Nicolaitanism and doctrines of Balaam, denounced as the thing which our Lord hates. My vices, however, were restrained by the seeds of religious morals, but received severe chastisement from the Lord. Still of religion I never heard a syllable out of church, and my opportunities were not great. I should remark, however, that I had studied the prayer-book a little, and before I was eighteen reflected much on my own weakness and follies, yet considering the sin of whoredom but a venial offence, necessarily resulting, as indeed it does, from the state of christian society, and seeing no other resource, led as I believe by the Holy Spirit, I did secretly bewail and lament my errors, but had no confidential ear which could sympathize with me in any of my feelings ; but I saw no failings in myself but this of licentious indulgence in sexual intercourse, which was necessarily indiscriminate in christian society not deemed of itself as very immoral. I sought the Lord of Life, and all sinner as I was, ventured to visit his

table, and to open my heart and mind to him, and to him only. I reasoned rightly. It was a positive command, given to all, not to the perfect only, for even the Apostles were not then converted, but also to sinners. In this view I commenced the christian practice of never turning my back on the Lord's table, which by God's grace I have continued ever since. Note this, my friends, for our projected abstract discussion must of necessity embrace this subject. My knowledge of the recondite doctrines and dogmas of religion were necessarily very superficial indeed. But this law which I then laid on myself was, I still think, most wise. Still I never met any one with whom I could commune on such subjects. I remained necessarily very ignorant, and my opportunities for this heart-felt religious and ceremonial communion were too rare to make the practice operative of all the good to myself that might have resulted from it. I affected, however, to be knowing. I could dispute too, had words at command, and a good memory, with general views, that I still think tolerably correct. My weakness, rather say my crying sin, was in the licentious practice of indiscriminate sexual intercourse. I bewailed, nay despised the vice, but could not extricate myself, and it pleased God to manifest his long suffering towards me not without sensible marks of his manifest displeasure.

When about twenty-one, I sailed with a captain noted for hypocrisy and many vices, (right or wrong, I cannot say,) but professing to be a religious man. My relations with him make an epoch in my life; but I must not here enter into them; they would lead us astray. One conversation I shall relate as to the point in hand. In a conversation in my watch on deck, with a third person, I proffered some remark on the Paganism which still existed in China and other parts: he remarked, that he wondered much that a young man who seemingly knew so much of all religions, had not yet chosen one for himself. I answered sarcastically, that men seemed to differ so much, that I feared by deciding too soon, I might make a wrong choice; perhaps he who had lived so much longer, and had studied the subject, would assist me and recommend one. He said this was a matter which every man must determine for himself. But he observed, "If you have no religion, you should profess some form of it, in compliance with the customs of the world," &c., and he entered into an elaborate discourse, showing its

advantages as teaching us indifference to life. "But," says he, "how is it, Mr. Lamb, that even good men, the most religious, prefer life to death, and cling to life even though they acknowledge it to be a state of misery?" And he enumerated some examples. "Can you account for this, Mr. Lamb?" said he. I answered, that I had been habituated ever since I was fourteen, to think, and never believed that hypocrisy was necessary to religion, and that I believed it better to appear not to have any religion, than to profess a religion, having none. In short, I never could believe, nor had I ever heard that hypocrisy was necessary to religion. As for the love of life, which most men had, I believed it might easily be accounted for, by the old fable, a bird in hand is worth two in the bush. "Bless me," exclaimed he, "did ever any man hear such a comparison? A bird in hand!" And so we parted. I mention this as the only conversation I ever had on ship-board on religious subjects. This man was my enemy.

My vicious propensities were inordinately indulged for some time, rather from habit and compliance with the customs of the world, than from an attachment to them. Intrigue I despised, but covert licentiousness was considered rather a noble and manly privilege than vices, and although knowing better, I was never cured of it perfectly until late in life. I was not married, but as is generally the case, I was worse. At twenty-four I read *Thelyphthora*, or Madan's Essay on Female Ruin, — an excellent work, too little known and appreciated. He traced the evil to its source, but has failed to draw from it all the requisite conclusions in practical morals. It furnished me with correct views, but did not produce unexceptionable practice. Yet I made a sort of compromise, uniting indulgence with partial responsibility.

The almost uninterrupted nature of my public services left me little leisure to pursue my disposition to acquire spiritual knowledge. At forty-four I married; thought myself a tolerably religious man, but knew myself to be as Reuben, unstable as water. At fifty-nine my worldly ambition was barred by corruption in high places. At sixty-one I became the Hermit who am now your host, and ready to pursue the subject of religion, superstition, and education as connected with them.

Since my retirement I have read much, and I may say my opinions may now fairly be supposed to be decided; and these needed not my account of them, since in the

course of our discussion they will necessarily be manifested.

ACADEMICUS. Although, Mr. Hermit, you have suppressed your adventures, which indeed we should much like to have heard a full account of, we are not the less obliged; and I must acknowledge, that although they might not have had so decided a relation to our subject, yet I confess myself somewhat disappointed herein; but perceive you have been more particular in the account of your childhood and youth, as more appropriate to the application of the principles that may result from our conversations on education. On referring to the notes you desired me to make, I perceive one relative to the very slight attention to morals, particularly as regards personal chastity. This deserves a particular investigation, for I have found throughout Christendom a laxity and indifference to this subject, that may perhaps lay at the root of every evil in christian society. One instance I remember in Holland, where in a large grammar school, the master's wife had a particular lust for debauching every youth in the school as soon as they attained to twelve or thirteen years of age, and on to fifteen and sixteen; and many scenes that would disgrace the nature of a brute, would be too disgusting to relate; and almost every public school for either sex, which has fallen under my observation, has nourished the weeds of sexual impurity, and has laid the foundation for Balaamism and Nicolaitanism, as you have explained them. I never before heard the explanation of those Moabitish vices, which have continued to disgrace Christendom ever since its earliest days. It is very striking, and doubtless true. But in what order, Mr. Hermit, shall we consider the subject before us?

HERMIT. I would propose as the first step, for I am more desirous to hear your observations than to offer my own, that you would each of you offer some descriptions of the different sects of christians, beginning with the Greek church, the Roman, the Lutheran, the Calvinist, the Arian, the Socinian, Arminian, Moravian, Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, &c. &c., noting the peculiarities of each, with such notions as may suggest themselves for remedying their errors, and the most available means for breaking down the sectarian partitions, and bringing back all sects to practical unity of profession and worship; to note what is truly religious in each; what superstitious, and the defects in the education of each. And Theophilus, as the advocate for apostolic succes-

sion, may first favor us with his observations on the Greek and Roman churches, as truly apostolic by succession, as they are remote in practice.

THEOPHILUS. Without further preface then. And I shall endeavor to confine my observations to as few points as possible, but those which appear to me the most essential. 1. The essential points of faith which I conceive of the first importance for any church, calling itself by the name of our Lord, viz: christian. 2. To those points which may seem peculiar to each. 3. To the ministry. 4. The ordinances, each of these embracing peculiarities, and in this I confess that my education and descent will induce me to consider the Church of England as the standard of a pure church. That of Greece and Rome may be considered together as agreeing in many points; both holding the doctrine professedly of the unity of the Godhead, the Nicene, Athanasian, and Apostolic creeds, yet differing in some respects from each other. Both are truly Apostolical and Episcopal by physical descent; and however they may have fallen into some errors, spiritually and practically, which we think are most serious, yet, as having the succession from the Apostles unquestionably, they are, as I conceive, legitimate branches of the Church Catholic, and the pure succession from the Apostles maintained in them; and the time they have endured, must entitle them to our respect and veneration.

Both have, however, indulged in useless and presumptuous attempts to define the peculiar nature of God, who is infinite. This, on the face of it, appears absurd; however, it has produced those two creeds — incomparable as compositions, and unquestionable, — the Athanasian and Nicene, neither of which I would perhaps, have ever recommended, because they are, notwithstanding the care, the talents and the pains bestowed on them, still obscure, and either say not enough or too much. The peculiarities of the Greek Church are, I believe, the use of chrism in baptism, which is substituted for confirmation, the invocation of saints, and, I believe, of the Virgin Mary, as the mother of God. Its liturgies are the labor of hundreds of years; and they have a set form of public worship for every day (I believe) of the year; and the people are so ignorant, that many of the observances derived from their fathers, are regarded superstitiously, and much more importance is given to the forms than the substance. To me no people seem more superstitious, and individually know and practice so little the gospel

precepts, except in one particular, their resignation to martyrdom. For under the Turkish yoke, I am told, they have through all the time of their slavery to that power, been subjected to such a revolting exercise of power as cannot be told. They always meet it in the spirit of the old martyrs, and with the same assurance of a heavenly crown. Thus I have been told that a single Turkish soldier has been known to enter the house of a Greek christian, and take off all the heads of a numerous family, calling them before him one by one, and without a murmur presenting their necks in succession to the stroke of his cimeter. I have been told, that whilst under the Turkish yoke, such an exhibition was by no means a rare occurrence. And I have presumed the administration of the ordinances of a divine religion must have been truly admirable, that could still keep alive this noble christian spirit of non-resistance to martyrdom. Nevertheless, the moral character of the modern Greek christians by no means corresponds to this virtue; and this devotedness may be said, I think, rather to result from superstition than religion, though our hopes and prayers should be, that they should yet reap the heavenly crown of martyr's reward. As for the Roman church, it is superfluous to enter on details; she is so intimately known to us all, that we can speak of her enormities, usurpations, corruptions, and final apostacy sealed by the Council of Trent, as they may arise for consideration, without recapitulating the appalling list of them, from which our church has been by God's grace, so happily delivered.

ACADEMICUS. My friend Theophilus, I must remind you that you have several times spoken of religion and superstition without having made the slightest attempt to define them. Do pray let us take care that we understand those words in the same meaning.

THEOPHILUS. I thank you, my friend Academicus; this should most certainly have been a preliminary step, equally incumbent on us all; and I take the whole Bible to be the Christian's rule of faith and standard of truth. I take religion to be such a knowledge of the spiritual government of God Almighty, as has in truth been revealed to us in the Bible or otherwise, and that superstition consists in acknowledging the spiritual government of God, but presuming that to be subjected to some rule of our own imagination not authorized by the Bible, nor by any assured revelation from God, and that neither religion

nor superstition can be subjected to the common understandings of men, both being purely spiritual.

Religion is a knowledge and subjection of mind and body to the truth, as revealed in Jesus Christ, the Amen. Superstition is a subjection of mind and body to laws ignorantly imposed on us, as the truth; that is, either founded on a lie, or on the perversion of some truth. In these senses I always use them.

HERMIT. You have travelled very cursorily over some other points equally necessary to be much better understood by us all, Theophilus. I would, therefore, by permission, ask you one or two questions. Of the Roman church, you have decided that she is in open rebellion, Satanic, and that she cannot, until reconverted, be brought into communion with any other body of christians.

THEOPHILUS. That is certainly my conviction.

HERMIT. But your opinion of the Greek church does not go this length, although you considered both together as manifestly resembling each other.

THEOPHILUS. I did so, because their views of the doctrines seemed to be very similar, nor indeed do they much differ in many superstitions; but the Greek has never apostatized from the truth by public profession. The truth of the gospel I believe to be in her, but much smothered in some instances. She has not assumed authority by usurpation, and if right means were used, I think she might be brought into communion with our reformed church.

HERMIT. What, Theophilus, is the great point in which all must be agreed to believe without difference, in a community of christians?

THEOPHILUS. That all should worship the same God, the true God, the God of the Bible, Jehovah, Jesus Christ, the Amen, the Almighty, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

HERMIT. You have here mentioned him (and I bespeak the serious reverence of us all in considering this subject,) by several names, and undoubtedly could have added forty more from the Bible. How then do you define the Trinity? Is your rule that of Athanasius?

THEOPHILUS. I must say that I have paid some attention to this mystery, and although not satisfied perfectly with it as explained either in the Nicene or Athanasian creeds, yet I really do not think a better or more satisfactory explanation of the doctrine could be given.



ACADEMICUS. On this subject, which stands in the very front of our religious profession, and has been the fruitful source of so many heresies, (so named,) which, indeed, I have never had sufficient data to examine, I must confess myself still far from a satisfactory conclusion, — equally averse from the Socinian vanities which generally accompany Unitarianism, and the seemingly absurd dictums of Orthodoxy. On that subject I am still somewhat at a loss, and the incertitude arising may account for much of my seeming skepticism. I cannot bring my mind in subjection to any form of words, which seems to embrace contradiction. I see nothing that a man need gainsay in the Nicene, but in the Athanasian creed it is not so. With the damnatory clauses I am less at issue, than to all relating to persons. I should much like to hear some observations from yourself, Mr. Hermit, on this difficult subject.

RUSTICUS. In which request I must join : for myself I have always considered the subject as beyond my reach and have been content to take it on trust as it stands, in the two explanatory creeds mentioned. I should, however, much like to hear some more satisfactory explanation than they give.

HERMIT. Academicus has, I think, rightly viewed the only difficulty as existing in the word persons in the one; and in the other creed, necessary obscurity arises from the attempt to explain by words the two natures in Jesus Christ, whereas the Almighty himself seems to me to have pointed to the only definition which we can in our present nature understand — a visible similitude or image of God in man. It behooves us much to examine well what scripture has said on the subject; and there are two publications where this appears to me to have been very well done; in Jones's little work on the Trinity, and Swedenborg's chapter on the Lord. We see every name of the Almighty God, and every attribute of the one only God, predicated of Jesus Christ, and in him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily, who is God over all blessed for ever. Therefore the conclusion is manifest; Jesus Christ is God Almighty, and the Lord our God is one Lord, or more strictly interpreted, the Eternal one Almighty is one Eternal, or Jehovah. So that every christian is in truth, or should be, strictly a Unitarian; but the sect so calling themselves absurdly, would rob this the christian's God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that only God revealed or

manifested to man in the Bible, and by and in every act attributed to him and recorded of him therein, they strip this one God of his divinity, and worship they know not what — a God manufactured, or concocted in that workshop of images, the imagination. But the human mind cannot stop itself here, for the same God has bestowed an intellect, his spirit, to search out the hidden things, even of God. Our Lord commanded us to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This command in this form, exists as a precept, but in a single text in Matthew, and in the benediction, an analagous form is sometimes used. In examining this subject, and taking the popular notion of a Trinity, I turned my attention to man, the type or image, made after the pattern of God. Man, I perceived, was composed of three distinct principles; the body which, without the other two, is a dead corpse; life being added, it becomes an animal. Intellect being superadded, he becomes a man. This analogy seemed so natural and so perfect, that I at once adopted and never since could mend it. Every man then is composed of a Trinity as incomprehensible to himself as that said to compose the Godhead, and presented in this form to any man, conveys a better notion of that mystery than can be obtained by any mere form of words.

THEOPHILUS. I confess I have never before heard of this, which seems to me so perfect a similitude; and being so familiar, my wonder is, that I never should have come across it in any writings, even of the Fathers.

HERMIT. My next step was to examine the form of Athanasius, and like Academicus, I stumbled at the first step, against the word person, and persons. Now we never call angels, or beings purely spiritual, persons; because, for the most part, we esteem them to want what seems to us ~~spiritual~~ <sup>substantial</sup> to person, viz., a body. Yet they cannot be manifested to the eye of man without assuming a substantial form also; and we can form no notion of what we call a person, without the combination of the three constituent parts, two of which seem to us purely spiritual, and one only substantial: so that the word person, according to my limited ideas, could not, in its commonly received sense, apply to the Godhead, except as manifested in the person of Jesus Christ: In the Creed, or form in question, I saw, that the word *persona* does not mean a person, in the sense we receive it: but rather it should be rendered into English, by the word

*office, or character* : if so rendered, the form did not appear to me to embrace any difficulty, much less a mystery, beyond that of man's own nature.

RUSTICUS. I thank you, most sincerely, Hermit, for this view of the subject. It has indeed rendered that hard knot of Theologists quite clear to my simple comprehension, as you have stated it ; not three persons and one God, but three characters, or modes of manifesting Almighty power in one Person and in one God, even our Lord Jesus Christ.

HERMIT. You seem, Rusticus, rightly to have comprehended my meaning, which is fully exemplified in Moses' account of the Creation, in the very first three verses of Genesis i., which may thus, I opine, be paraphrased from a very superficial knowledge of Hebrew, which I diligently inquired into for a few weeks ; and assisted by the views of Mr. Tilloch, whose short Essay on the language of the Apocalypse seems to me worthy of serious observation. He has rescued that divine book from the charge of barbarous and ungrammatical language, which I confess was for some time a stumbling-block in my way, as it has long been in our Universities even. "In the beginning, Power Almighty made the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without any (spiritual) properties, (but purely substantial,) and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of Almighty Power brooded over the face of the waters. And the Word of Almighty Power commanded light to be," &c. Now we render the word "Elohim," by God, but its true signification seems to be that of an attributive noun, describing a property of an abstract nature, to which neither form nor semblance can be imagined. And this form of expression is in Hebrew, generally, as it appeared to me, plural ; as in the heavens, for space in the abstract. Lives, youth, virginity, and others, which our English idiom generally expresses in a singular form, as God, heaven, life, youth, &c. Without however spending more time on speculative verbal criticism, let us proceed with my mode of substantiating the view I had taken of this momentous question of the Trinity.

The command of our Lord was to baptize in the name (not names) of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit : and this form has continued to this day. Therefore, there can be no reasonable doubt that he did so direct, and no doubt for wisest reasons. But in Acts ii. Peter says, "Repent,

“and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ,” &c. Father, Son, and Spirit, is, then, the name of Jesus Christ. So does the same Book of Acts furnish examples of baptizing in the name of Jesus, and of the Lord. And Paul to the Corinthians takes it for granted that they had been baptized in the name of the Lord who was crucified for them, that is, Jesus Christ. Seeing, then, that through the whole Bible the analogy which, by God's grace, had been suggested to me by the plain reading of Genesis i., was every where upheld, and nowhere contradicted, you will not wonder that I am tenacious of it. However, I referred to the Fathers, and found some very obscure references to a heresy, which seemed to have something of the same view, — the Sabellian, as it is called. What the precise nature of that heresy was, I can find nowhere described, but believe it to have been something similar to this I have described, except that Sabellius seems to have added some fanciful speculations with which I have nothing to do. I gather, however, from very obscure premises, that he believed or imagined, that God Almighty ruled men in the Patriarchal ages, as the Almighty Father — that is, in that character only ; in the Mosaic dispensation, as the Son, the Angel of the Covenant, in whom was the name, viz., having all the attributes of Almighty Power ; and in the Christian dispensation, by the Holy Spirit : but that these three were and are the very same and only God Almighty. If, indeed, this was the notion of Sabellius, I see nothing in it to quarrel about ; but I confess that I confined my speculations to individual man. I conceived that that name of our Lord, which may truly be said to be triune, set forth his characters, or the modes by which he manifests himself to every man ; and that every man is an epitome of the world or microcosm. As the Father, he shows or manifests himself in the whole contemplative creation, visible and invisible, physical and spiritual ; as the Son, in the open, supernatural, personal and angelic apparitions, from Adam to his advent in humility, and even until that glorious and consummating advent when he will again be manifested to the men of all ages in the glorious majesty of the Eternal Almighty. And lastly, the Holy Ghost is that mode of manifesting Almighty Power, whose sphere of operation is the inner or spiritual man, as in Moses and all the Prophets, in the Apostles, and in John, when he said he was in the Spirit ; and as we believe, in all the children of our Lord's family, even

of this day, to whom he has imparted this comfortable spirit of salvation and eternal life. These are the methods, or means, or characters, or offices, by which God has, in all ages, made himself known to man, and, I believe, the only means; and in whichever of these three distinct characters we consider him, he is still the same God, who was in Jesus Christ, reconciling the world to himself: God over all, blessed for ever. If it were possible to mistake him, with the Bible for our guide, the scenic representations of the Apocalypse would decide the question, that Jesus Christ, he who shed his own blood for us, is the Alpha and Omega, the first and last, beginning and ending, the Amen, the Almighty, &c. &c. These, my friends, are my views on this very weighty doctrinal subject of the Trinity, which might have been extended into volumes.

**THEOPHILUS.** Before we enter into any discussion on this your very brief but lucid statement of your idea of this doctrine of the Trinity, will you favor us with further remarks on two other doctrines of the Apostles' Creed, the descent into Hell or Hades, and the right hand of God.

**HERMIT.** On the former, our Lord is silent; but Peter has a text which the Romans have perverted into authority for their notions of purgatory, and David, in the Psalm which Peter in Acts ii. quotes, upholds the notion: but I see not that much harm would have accrued from its absence from the later forms of profession, as well as the earlier, in which as well as the Nicene and Athanasian creeds, it was omitted, nor do I see any ill that it does, where it is. On the second question, God may be said to be all right hand, or power. I conceive the right hand to be a mere metaphor, peculiar to old forms of speech, for power, and so it is sometimes expressed in Scripture. The meaning then, in plain English is, that Jesus Christ is in Heaven, on the Throne of God, and endued with power Almighty, and the phrase "sitting at the right hand of God," would have been less liable to be misunderstood, if it had been so rendered. As it stands, it conveys a wrong notion. The word sitting is also a metaphor, for "fixed," "established," &c. &c.

**ACADEMICUS.** I thank you most sincerely, Hermit. I think your explanation of these creeds, even so far as you have favored us, worth the whole voyage across the Atlantic. But our conversation has trespassed a little on your hours. It is now past three, A. M. So good night: or morning.

## FIFTH CONVERSATION.

THEOPHILUS. Although I listened to your discourse with great delight, because the views were to me novel; yet Hermit, you will excuse me for suggesting, whether your notion which subverts, root and branch, the charge of Pantheism, or three distinct Gods, laid against the Trinitarian christians, whether you think this doctrine, or exposition of the true doctrine, thus destroying at a blow all the mysticism hitherto attached to it, could be so expressed by unobjectionable words, that all christians would or could concur. Certainly, if we may take this company as a rule, we were by no means agreed before. But your exposition seems here carried, heart and voice, *nem. con.* Now, although it was not necessary to the very simple, natural and truly scriptural analogy you have adopted, and which I have pondered over all this day, and am but the more surprised at its close adaptation to the pattern or anti-type, in every light viewed, but do you really think, Hermit, that the World and the Devil and the Pope will so easily give up their three persons, three distinct beings, to make up their one character, or power of God — a sort of incomprehensible triumvirate, such as is exemplified in Roman history at different times? And how, Hermit — how do you get rid of the many ingenious definitions of person, got up to reconcile the Mystics to the unintelligible language of their creed of Athanasius? I call it unintelligible, because it is not meant to describe or define any thing really intimately known to any man; nor imaginable, as having any existing similitude within his knowledge. I have stated in my view, that the difference between you and Athanasius is broad and distinct. He makes three distinct persons or beings, each with all the properties of persons; each of them one Almighty Power; yet each being in himself a distinct Almighty; and he says these three are not to be confounded in person, — that is, as each distinct beings, — and yet must not be imagined to be divided in substance; and having done all that language can do to assure us that each of the three persons are each of them God Almighty, he at once leaps the barrier he himself has raised, and exclaims, but these are not three Gods, but one God, Your exposition, on the contrary, declares one God, and that every mode by which he has shown himself to man, may be embraced, and do in reality fall

within three distinct characters or modes of manifestation of one person or being only, one and indivisible.

1. As the God and Father of all things, manifested only by the works of the creation, or things made. And this view embraces all the elements of natural religion, as it is called.

2d. By supernatural apparitions or communications external, as regards man. This is the source of revealed religion from God, as the Son, the Word, the manifestation of the living God.

3d. And lastly, by inspiration, or special intellectual endowment; which is internal as regarding the immediate subject being man. This is the Holy Ghost. And that all these modes of manifestation to man, are powers, or characters, or attributes of the one only God of christians, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob by some have been considered types of these three characters.

Indeed, you have treated Athanasius not as an opponent but friend and coadjutor; for by defining the one word person, to mean office or character, and not a distinct being, he says precisely the same thing. But yet our Lord prays to his Father, and speaks of him as of a distinct being, even as distinct as a human father and a beloved son; and much else that I need not capitulate, that the world in its present skeptical humor will, as they have done with the truth, reject it on its first showing forth. But great is truth. It is even our God and Lord himself, as you say, the Amen, and he will prevail. For this end, O Lord Jesus, come quickly, as thou hast promised on thy word, which is the Truth, Amen.

HERMIT. I thank you sincerely, Theophilus I did rather not expect so easy a convert in your orthodoxy, although I value myself quite as much as you do on that. You seem rightly to have comprehended the real question, which is, whether we shall continue to use a form of words, as expressing a universal belief in what no two of the professors can form quite similar and intelligible notions of, and perhaps no two understanding it alike, who will endeavor to put their ideas into words; indeed, whether we shall continue to say and believe there are three distinct persons or beings, each of whom is Almighty God, and yet affirm not three Gods, but one God. It is, to say the least of it, an absurd mystification. The real question is, whether we will preach to the unlearned christian, three Gods, or one God. For taking the Roman idols to set forth their real creed, we know

that they have in some of their cathedrals in Italy and Piedmont, representations of the Trinity by three distinct images, which no art of sophistry can make a peasant or fisherman really believe to be but one, although his priest may avow it to be so till doomsday, and may imprison him in the inquisition, or in purgatory, if he presume to say the three pieces of wood or stone are three and not one. We reject their images, but adopt their creed. The American church has done well to reject both. I would, Theophilus, avoid detailed discussion, or observations, as much as possible now. Perhaps if you return this way from the westward, we may then have more leisure to dilate on the principles we may now elicit. To answer the question of our Lord's praying to his Father, whilst in human form and character, divines have explained it amply. He then held a double character, as Creator and creature, as God and man. The creature, — though in this double character united in him, and truly in his person, — the creature even in him must be subordinate to its Creator, and whether begotten or made, the man Jesus must be considered a creature, as to his body or person or being, which was the mere temple or dwelling of the Godhead while on earth, mortal and substantial as man himself — and if we consider the constituent parts of man, as simply pure spirit, in life and intellect, and purely substantial in earthly body; thus, as two distinct beings, soul and body. The soul may by any man be imagined to be endowed with even Almighty power; that is, to be Almighty power itself; that is, to be God, and have in his own dominion and under his rule, his subject visible body in man's form. This is a sort of simple metaphysics, quite comprehensible by the most vulgar minds, who all understand what we mean, if we say the soul of Jesus Christ was God Almighty, and he took the body into union with himself, and fulfilled as a man more than ever he had exacted from any man, as his God and Maker, and so justified perfectly the ways of God, even to man, — and oh! what a glorious subject for man's unrestrained joy and songs of praise! to the confusion of the Fatalist, and for the assurance of salvation to sinners! Here would be a theme for songs and rhapsodies of praise for an eternity of time. But my friends, it is too much for men. On earth, we are still subject to the evil one, the curse, and must toil as well as pray for our daily bread. But I am digressing. Presuming that you are satisfied, we have as yet had no occasion to depart from the analogy, to account



for our Lord's subservience to God, even as the body to the soul, even whilst in union, even as our own souls and bodies.

But a few words more may not be amiss on the personality of each person, as it is called, in the Trinity—of which term I have ever found those to be most tenacious who understood it least.

ACADEMICUS. But how do you reconcile the prayers of our Lord to addresses to his own soul, Mr. Hermit? They are represented as being always addressed to a being external to himself—and the voice from heaven was certainly external, as regarded the visible person of our Lord.

HERMIT. This may be answered directly, by our Lord's ubiquity, who, as he declared himself, though visibly and manifestly on earth, was then in heaven; and indirectly, by asking how we pray to and for, and by the Holy Spirit, then indwelling in us. Is it not by addressing our prayers to him in his character of Universal Father, and manifested in the Son? We neither apostrophize our own souls, where and in whom he dwells, and therefore in our bodies; nor do we address him in the form of the dove, which is said to have been one of the first forms of Pagan idolatry; nor do we address him as manifested in the form of fiery cloven tongues; nor in the fire which descended from Heaven, and of old consumed the sacrifices—another form of Pagan heresy or idolatry. In this view, we address the Spirit of Almighty Power, which pervades the universe; but the whole universe is not incased in the body of any man, who is within the universe, not containing it. In this view, Arius' views of the human nature of our Lord himself, however erroneous on the whole, may be reconciled to the truth, if we could consider the man Christ Jesus separate and distinct from his Godhead; which, as it never, that we know of, did exist in this separate state, is a species of metaphysical anatomy, to be seriously deprecated, because beyond our limited faculties. Let us not attempt to be wise above what is revealed or written. What has been the fruitful source of all the heresies, all the infinitely-divided opinions of men, resulting from this metaphysical anatomy? This is beautifully illustrated in the fable of Dædalus and Icarus, whose wings are a figure of the imagination. Let us earthly creatures take our stand on earth. We are permitted to anatomize earthly bodies, created things; to trace them to the first great Cause; but of that cause, and it is one only,

of all things in earth or heaven, as both reason and revelation assures us, we can know nothing; we can only know spiritual or heavenly things, by supernatural aid; by revelations or communications from Heaven itself. Let us here end with the Trinity, and only attempt its contemplation as exemplified in its type, to which we have been referred by God himself to study it, viz. in man.

But to answer, Theophilus, whether the creed we have attempted to elucidate could be expressed in such terms or words as might be universally received by christians, I do indeed think it would be difficult. It must be possible, however. Our present forms of expression fall very short, I think, of expressing what we mean to say. I believe in God — the Father — the Son — the Holy Ghost — the Resurrection from the dead — the Life Everlasting — the Holy Catholic Church — the Communion of Saints, &c. &c. What do we believe of all these? — Certainly, not the very same thing. For example, we believe in the first three, as the characters or modes by which God has been pleased to manifest himself to man; but of the others, as simple truths, assured by revelation from him. You have heard how I express my creed, in our evening's exercises of prayer. I pretend not that it is unexceptionable, nor does it come up to my own sense of my relations with God Almighty; but, imperfect as it is, he will, I believe, graciously accept it. For as John says, the world itself would not contain the account of all his acts; nor the period of our whole time in eternal existence, for recounting them. How imperfect then must be all human attempts to say all we ought to say in a few fugitive words! Such great and fundamental truths, as I arrive at from time to time, I generally endeavor to express to our Lord and God, in prayer; and this better imprints them on my own memory — to him they can add nothing, nor take any thing from him.

ACADEMICUS. You remember, perhaps, my relative and namesake, in Law's 'Spirit of Prayer.' I was much pleased with the recapitulation of your creed in form of prayer; and being, like my namesake, desirous of instruction, should much desire to have a copy of that you repeated, although I am aware that no two persons will perhaps express themselves precisely alike, although not differing in sentiment in the least. Permit me to beg a copy of this evening's prayer, so far as meant to express your creed, after the Lord's Prayer.

**HERMIT.** Willingly; they were such as Law's Theophilus there recommended, the produce of conviction and of the heart. I have never yet attempted to put them into written form; thus they were expressed this evening: "Govern me, O Lord God, by thy Holy Spirit in all things, by thy will, not by mine; and so that I may love and serve thee, with my whole heart and soul, and worthily praise thy name in Christ my Lord; and so perform my duty, as may be honorable and acceptable to thee, creditable to myself, and beneficial to my country and to all mankind." And again: "Open the heart and mind of thy servant, to a true knowledge and understanding of thy Will and thy Word; and enable me by thy Holy Spirit, to perform the same, by the blessed mediation of my Saviour, my Redeemer, and my God Jesus Christ the righteous, my Father and my friend; the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the Almighty; the Eternal; the only and ever-living God, to whom be all honor, praise and glory, for ever and ever, Amen."

This I suppose is the part of the evening service you alluded to; but I have no permanent set form of words, except our Lord's own, and these other vary with my feelings at the time, but all expressive of the same idea, that the only God, as manifested in Jesus Christ, is that Almighty Power, to whom I hold myself responsible for all my thoughts, words, and works, and that he is all goodness, mercy, and love, and that all my hopes in time and eternity, are centred in him, and in him only.

**ACADEMICUS.** I thank you, Hermit, and certainly am delighted with your analogy of the Trinity; in man as body, life, and intellect, which I never remarked among those used by the Fathers or later divines; these I remember are the sun, light, and heat; ice, water, and vapor; understanding, will, and memory, as purely intellectual, and some others. But the most complete and universally understandable is certainly, as you have said, man himself.

**RUSTICUS.** This subject of the fundamental doctrine, I think I now perfectly understand. That our God is one God, and dwells in the temple built without hands, even Jesus Christ, as he did aforetime in his type or shadow on the mercy seat in the temple and tabernacle, &c. I would now, my friends, call your attention as to the modes of his government, whether by fatal decrees, or subject to all the contingences of man's free will. The Greeks are, I believe, for the most part, predesti-

narians, and the Romans, by no means so; the Kirk is so decidedly; the Church of England not so, that is, so far as can be made out from their practice and professions. My friends and self, Mr. Hermit, have frequently discussed this point, and do not, I think, differ irreconcilably. Theophilus and self are more at issue, I think, on the personal character of Calvin, than on his doctrines, which I cannot persuade myself to admit without much modification as regards reprobation. The half-and-half Calvinism of that party in the Church of England called evangelical, I confess, seems to approach much nearer to my views than even the Kirk, which seems now to relax much from the severe construction of Calvin's five points.

THEOPHILUS. I confess, notwithstanding, the more common opinion of men who assume a pious walk and character, are decidedly in favor of Calvinism, and for the most part, I believe, profess it, and call themselves Calvinists. Yet I have an almost instinctive abhorrence of it, and I cannot but esteem it as subversive of the pure and simple christianity preached by our lowly Saviour and his blessed apostles, as the Roman or papal apostacy itself. Calvinism in these days, and the self-styled evangelicals and others, who have set up certain marks of a sort of will-worship, as their distinguishing mark, are too exactly portrayed in the pharisees of old, not to be recognized at a glance; but this is declamation perhaps, not argument, that seems done to our hands however, most ably, by three champions of our church, Whitby, Tomline, and Mant; they however have not touched on the personal character of Calvin in such terms as it seems to merit. They were divines as learned, at least, as Calvin — and no man can deny him this quality, even very superior to most men of his day, yet on his personal character I have heard little, but certainly it was not marked by apostolic humility. Our judicious Hooker has described his tact in policy, and has shown the fallacy of his dogmas with christian forbearance and talent and learning, even exceeding his own (Calvin's.) But the authors who have opposed this Calvinism, have not, I think, any of them, from the meek Arminius and Hooker, down to Mant and Tomline, shown the dire effects of Calvinism on the christian morals of its professors by any well-digested history of any bodies of men associated on his principles. The Kirk is its fairest specimen, but in her, Calvin's extravagance in the five

dogmatic points is very much modified, and she is daily receding more and more in practice from the strait-laced rules of its first days. Calvin's own school! Where and what is it now at Geneva? there he is superseded as an apostle by John Jack Rousseau, and the French schools. Remember too, Calvin's own ungovernable temper, proud and haughty in *his* way, as the pope, and perhaps, as cunning, and as much disposed to persecution, if he had had the power. Witness the burning of Servetus; witness the whole history of puritanism, wherever it governed; the direct tendency to unequivocal fatalism of his fatal decrees. All this seems to me, to bring Calvinism down to the same level as Mahometism and paganism of old, of which fatalism was the common mark, and one other mark they have in common. Whoever hold the doctrines of fatalism can join with their worship (under the name of worldly prudence) the gratification of their favorite desires or lust, whether the pride or ambition of Satan, or avarice of mammon; and even the short time that we have been in this country, where Calvinism is the basis of almost all *their* religion who pretend to any, or that to which it naturally tends, Socinianism, we see the service of mammon universally associated with the service of God. I see numbers in your good towns of Havredelest, Hanston, and Pickhard, who assume a pious gait and external decency, that is delightful to contemplate, but follow them home, and you soon see them entirely absorbed in dollars and cents. In short, to draw a small but striking parallel with its opposite popery, Calvinism gives its elect votaries a general character of self-indulgence; they are told the elect cannot so sin as to place their salvation in any jeopardy. Romanism sells indulgences for limited times and purposes, or absolves them on confession for sins past; but Calvinism, being once spiritually assured of pardon, it seems to absolve them from past, present, and future sins. What must be the state of morals with unlearned and ignorant men under the influence of such opinions?

RUSTICUS. My friend Theophilus, I have frequently heard you more eloquent on this subject, but must confess our observation of its results on the common people in mass, in this part of America, is the strongest argument to me, of its tendency, when unfettered by learning and moral habits, as for the most part it is in my country. There evidently must be something wrong in or about it. I should much like to hear a few words

from Hermit on the subject, if he will oblige us, and I should not wonder if Theophilus' parallel of Calvinism, with the fatalism of Mahomet and Pagans of old, was to arouse Academicus, who seems half asleep.

ACADEMICUS. I have never listened to Theophilus with more pleasure: it would have been increased had he been more argumentative and less declamatory. I am persuaded that if any more rigid professor of Calvinism than Rusticus, had heard his parallel of Calvinism with Romanism, they would have been more uneasy. I am charmed with it, and think it might be carried out much farther, nor indeed was I quite aware that fatalism was a peculiar and marked feature of paganism, as well as Mahometism. On this subject however, I confess myself a learner, therefore a listener only, and shall be delighted to hear Hermit speak on this subject.

HERMIT. Theophilus has done well and wisely; this subject has been argued ably, fully, and with great learning and ability, by the authors he mentions, and he has very prettily added some observations of his own, which if Rusticus had more prejudices than he professes, in favor of the Genevan reformer, must have had some effect to remove them. What I shall say, will be more for the satisfaction of Academicus, who, before he comes to a conclusion in judgment, likes to see the major and minor propositions; and I confess, and feel no shame in confessing, that I have a much clearer conviction of the whole subject than I can easily or satisfactorily express, and am quite sure that I shall use many more words than might set forth the subject more clearly. I must again take man as he is, for my subject. I assume no speculative man, a man merely dressed out or endowed by my imagination, but a man such as I can take myself in my own person, for a fair sample, and such others as I may have some intimate knowledge of. I find myself in this world, what may be called a free man; that is, subject in my conduct to no restraints, but those imposed by my own judgment and will. How these may be operated on is a question quite foreign to this truth. That my conduct in this world, in all circumstances, is subject to my will, and that will, so far as my conduct goes, is despotic; my will then is free; every act of my life proves this, in so far as I do it, or do it not, as my will may dictate. This is so, for the old woman's reason, because it is so, and every man knows it. It requires no further demonstration, and even Academicus may adopt it as an axiom in our

Polemics. The will then, being the master of our conduct, and its sole director, must be responsible for the right or wrong of our actions, because the only direct mover or cause. But responsible, how? and to whom? Is it responsible to the judgment? alas! too often it proceeds in defiance of judgment; the judgment is the lawful counsellor of the will; they ought never to be two, but one, even as the Son and the Father are one. When the will casts off his allegiance to judgment, or understanding, or wisdom, then I find it may choose counsellors by caprice, either of the world, the flesh, or the devil, and the conduct will generally be found of a character corresponding, but still the will is the only responsible agent, because perfectly free, that is, under no necessity to choose perverse or wicked counsellors. On the contrary, if any necessity be admitted at all, it would appear to be to render the will subservient to judgment.

And God Almighty gave man dominion, &c.; that is, made him monarch over the piece of earth — the microcosm, man, and its subject beasts of the earth, creeping things, birds and fishes; that is, of all the passions, lusts, desires, and endowments of mind and body, of which the beasts, &c., are animated types or analogies; and rendered man's will, the despot ruler of all these — but the authority of the will, the inner man, was to be limited by judgment and wisdom. But to cut short this spiritualism, man was made free to act, by his own will, free to stand, free to fall. This is our axiom established, therefore it is responsible to no one but self for its free exercise of inherent dominion; and only responsible for the effects, which, unless the will had been subject to judgment or wisdom, the conduct resulting from the counsel of the world, the flesh, or the devil, must lead to corresponding results; and in the end, quite subvert and depose from his office, him who ought to be the legitimate spouse and counsellor of the will, viz: the judgment, wisdom, analogies of the Father and Spirit, as will is of the Son. The will then, subjected to its own guiding spirit, is the natural alliance to which it should be subject. The will itself should partake of the very nature of its own author of being, the understanding, even a rib of the very body. Such an alliance may perpetuate its generations, even to eternal life. But when the will plays the whore against her legitimate lord, and forms unnatural alliances with the world, flesh or devil, then they generate only monsters, mules, which cannot be perpetuated, and so must

die — must come to an end — and thus the crime of perverse will is self-destruction. But Calvin, in so far as he makes man and his will creatures of necessity, necessarily removes all responsibility from them both — and to do this, he sets up a thing for a God, absolutely unknown in the Bible — a God who has imposed no laws or restraints on himself — a God who has given to man nothing but a wretched and worthless being, with no dominion, no power; in short, with no endowment, nor any condition of eternal life, but the capricious exercise of unaccountable, irresponsible power, by a system of pure and capricious favoritism. This is his idol — Fate, Moloch. But the God of the Bible has no relation with this idol whatever. Our God has of his free grace, entered into most gracious covenant with man on every dispensation, and has thus placed limits to his own exercises of power — not to his power, but to its exercise or use. My judgment has then thus decided of Calvin — that in opposing the idolatry and corruptions of the Papacy, he set up a still more hideous and fearful idol, if that be possible, and even another form of Antichrist. I might exemplify this view by numerous analogies, taken from real life and the history of man. But you, my friends, Rusticus and Academicus, may do this better, since you have travelled over the ground. I shall mention, much later, abstracting from the question of Calvinism, that of church government, which makes no part of it. I consider it here, only as regards the nature and principles of God's government of this world and of man. I consider Calvinism is typified by the government of the Grand Turk, whose prime minister is the bow-string, and rule of government, despotic caprice. True christianity is represented by the British Constitutional Government, where the justice of the sovereign is limited by laws of his own self-imposition; but whose mercy alone, is without bounds or restraint. Of spiritual despotism, under any name, I have an instinctive abhorrence. Whether Calvin or Papa Peter be the despot, is indifferent — they are both, I think, to be eschewed.

And, indeed, I have set up in my own mind, a principle which flows from pure reason, and is supported by all my experience. By this principle, I endeavor to test all opinions, particularly the dogmas, doctrines or precepts of religion, which lie at the root of social morals. If the religious principles taught with a view to influence the actions of men, be such as impose a severe and



just responsibility for their actions; making them rewardable and punishable, according as they be good or evil — that religion must be good, its decided aim is to encourage good and repress evil — and in proportion as man is left free to commit actions, good or evil, with impunity. The religion, or the maxims which inculcate such irresponsible conduct, must be evil. Fatalism and Favoritism would take all responsibility from man — therefore they tend naturally to evil. So Romanism is fatal to good order, because weak and wicked men, as priests, usurp the right of God, and by presuming to pardon sins by their dictum and judgment only, they destroy man's responsibility to God, for their evil deeds. Fatalism and superstitious licentiousness are equally at enmity with true religion, with God and man.

I am afraid I have succeeded ill in my attempts to compress this subject of Calvinism, within some simple rule of judgment; but am not aware that I could say more to the purpose in a volume.

ACADEMICUS. Hermit, you have referred to Rusticus and myself, to draw out your parallel of the Grand Turk, and free constitution of our own country — although the view you have taken, is in some particulars, novel. More I think need not be said to satisfy both Rusticus and myself, that Calvinism, so far as it is fatalism, is devilish, and therefore damnable.

THEOPHILUS. We seem perfectly agreed as to the pernicious tendency of the peculiar notions designated generally by the name of Calvin, as they are reputed, he having reduced them to something like system. There is another strong objection, which it is true does not stand against the doctrines, in the abstract, and which bears with quite as much force against other sects of christianity; even where no other objection seems to lie against their abstract doctrines. It is the adoption of the names of men, as dividers of christianity into sects; as, "I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas." So long as this practice holds, I would inquire if it be possible for any thing like unity of community to exist. The Apostle Paul has given us his opinion clearly against the practice. I presume therefore, we of this company will, without exception, make up our minds, that sectarian names to mark or denote differences of modes of faith — so long as the names of Calvin, Arminius, the Pope, Whitfield, Wesley, Methodism, Campbellism, or other names of men, however good or great — so long as these

names are used, and men calling themselves christians, class themselves in different parties, designated by these names, christians cannot act as one body; and therefore this may be assumed to be wrong. But our next question for discussion may embrace this subject more properly. I propose therefore, if it be agreeable, church government shall next come under our consideration. In this, my friends and I are more discordant. For I confess that I am decidedly, by conviction and every feeling, an Episcopalian, according to Apostolical succession, as now existing in the Church of England; and perhaps the best way to treat it, will be to discuss such objections as may be offered by my friends to that system of perpetuating church government, until our Lord shall come in person, and himself assume the reins of his own government, sensibly.

ACADEMICUS. The course proposed by Theophilus, seems unobjectionable. For myself, I may say that I have no predilection for any set or order of men, whose distinctions from the mass rest on doubtful testimony. I shall therefore, by permission, ask Theophilus a few questions, to lead us to a fair review of the various systems; presuming we are all acquainted with all the common-place on the subject, which to me, I must confess, does all fall short of demonstration — nor can I reconcile to my own mind, the conclusions of the advocates for apostolic succession, as generally understood to consist in the formal imposition of hands — hands, it may be of reprobates. Nor am I better satisfied with the remedies suggested and adopted by the opponents of such a succession; for generally, instead of remedying the evils complained of, they perpetuate them in what appears to me a worse form. But Theophilus, what is the duty of the men who hold the respective offices of bishop, priest and deacon, the three orders of men in your system? and what are the privileges you claim for them? and on what authority? or rather, to begin at the fountain-head, will you recite the authorities in scripture; the divine commission, on which, all who pretend to any authority in Christ's church, or over or among his people, do rest their claims?

THEOPHILUS. I shall endeavor to do so, Academicus, as well as I am able, and can see no difficulty in satisfying you perfectly on the fundamental points to which your questions relate. But I must premise, that if I fail to satisfy all this company, the fault will rather be mine,

than that full satisfaction is not to be had from more able advocates. First then, the apostolic commission is, I conceive, contained in Mark xvi. 14, 20; Matth. xxviii. 18, 20; Luke xxiv. 45, 53; John xxi. 15, 17; Acts i. 8. These different authorities must contain in them all the power given to the Apostles, and derivable through the succession from them, and which appears ample enough.

ACADEMICUS. Did they at once enter on their office?

THEOPHILUS. Not until Acts ii., when they received the power promised from above, that is, from our Lord; who had thenceforth all power in heaven and in earth, and on earth.

ACADEMICUS. Have you overlooked Matt. xviii. 19, 20, Theophilus?

THEOPHILUS. I did not consider it essential to the personal commission, but am glad you have mentioned it.

ACADEMICUS. Perhaps it may be found more essential than at first sight appears. Was the declaration quoted, addressed to each of the apostles, or to the church at large?

THEOPHILUS. To the church at large; that is, to all Christ's disciples.

ACADEMICUS. What personal endowment was necessary, even to the apostles, for the ministry?

THEOPHILUS. Power from on high, which was given to them, Acts ii.

ACADEMICUS. That is what we term supernatural powers, such as promised, Mark xvi.

THEOPHILUS. Yes, the power of working miracles was to be the proof of their divine commission, and this proof they displayed openly.

ACADEMICUS. Was this power to be transmitted also to all their successors in the same office?

THEOPHILUS. The power of working miracles was not considered a necessary certificate of their commission, after one or two generations.

ACADEMICUS. By whom was it not considered necessary? and on what authority did they so decide?

THEOPHILUS. Because the proofs of the divine calling of the apostles was then recorded, and were sufficient to establish their authority; for all their acts, and those of all their successors, regularly appointed.

ACADEMICUS. The first act of this transmission of apostolic powers I think, is recorded in Acts i. 21. 26. Was that recorded to show to future generations that Matthias was regularly and divinely appointed to the

office? or was it intended as the rule and method by which the divine will may be known in all future appointments to that office?

**THEOPHILUS.** I confess, that if that had been left to be decided by my judgment, I should have concluded that the successors to the apostles should be chosen from such as were publicly acknowledged to have proper qualification for [the office, and then, that our Lord's will should be known to determine the appointment. But the church has deemed, for many ages, that the self-declaration of the candidate, that he believes he is called by God, or by the Holy Ghost, to the office in question, to be sufficient, without referring to the lot, or any other sensible notice of our Lord's own will in the matter.

**ACADEMICUS.** I fear, Theophilus, this concession is fatal to the exclusive pretensions; but I think we have another apostolic appointment recorded, that of Paul to the Gentiles, Acts xiii. 1, 4. This is recorded as the rule by which missionaries were thenceforth to be chosen and sent to the heathen. Does your church practice this now? I observe within a few years we have sent bishops east and west, and have established an episcopal church; daughter of its English mother in these United States. Was all this done by the Holy Ghost, his will being in any way sensibly manifested in those arrangements?

**THEOPHILUS.** Of my own knowledge, I cannot say how these ordinations have occurred in our church, but believe that they have occurred, as in our church at home, by royal mandate, because at the reformation, in order to extricate the church out of the pope's hands, (who, as to the ministry, had usurped the authority of our Lord and his Holy Spirit,) we gave ourselves into the hands of the state, who, as a corporate body of christians, has a right to choose out of the church such as shall serve it in such offices as are necessary for the administration of spiritual sacraments and ordinances, and so the head of this corporate body, the State, we acknowledge as head of the church.

**ACADEMICUS.** I was not ignorant of the fact, Theophilus, but I desired to hear you state it yourself. Now, do I understand you rightly, that in the ordination of bishops, for foreign missions, or for home service, the royal mandate of the head of the state, (be that king, queen, Turk, Jew, or infidel,) is substituted for the authority of our Lord and his Holy Spirit? In putting this question,

Theophilus, I would not seem ignorant, that, ostensibly, this mandate is presumed to be agreeable to the Holy Spirit, because the candidate declares that he believes himself moved thereto by the Holy Ghost, or something tantamount. However, so far as the appointment to the apostolic office by the rules we have referred to in scripture, this does seem, at first view, to differ from our practice root and branch, principle and practice, and so Theophilus, we will give you, if you please, an opportunity of explaining these discrepancies of ancient and modern practice.

THEOPHILUS. Your difficulty perhaps, Academicus, may be attributed to my apparent negligence, to set forth the appointments of Timothy and Titus to the apostolic offices, and perhaps Silas, Epaphras, and others, may be adduced. All these seem to have been ordained by the simple laying on of the hands of Paul and the elders, by Paul's own appointment, which seems to be the form the Gentile, indeed the whole christian church adopted, and has ever since continued; neither to Timothy or Titus, does Paul command to refer their choice of bishops or elders to the Holy Spirit; he mentions, indeed, that Timothy was called to the office by prophecy, and indeed that text of Mark iv. 26—29, seems to intimate that miraculous interference with the conduct of the church would cease. Indeed, we have full testimony by the practice of the churches of Greece and Rome, continued through all the intervening ages, that the transmission of apostolical authority, and the other ministerial orders, as now practiced in our church, is regular and legitimate, and has been continued without one breach, down to the present day, in our church.

ACADEMICUS. I must interrupt you, Theophilus, here. Do I understand you rightly, that you relinquish all the scripture texts and authorities for ministerial ordination except, in so far as they accord with traditionary custom in the churches?

THEOPHILUS. I fear I must, for it cannot be denied, the scriptural rules do no where accord with any practice that I know or read of since the days of Constantine, and certainly the miraculous powers promised to faith, or to those that believe, Mark xvi. 17, they do not appear to have been claimed even, except in some rare cases, and by the Roman church, who resort to fraud to make lies pass for true miracles.

ACADEMICUS. This, my friend is ingenuous, and like

yourself. But now tell me, what are the privileges and powers obtained to ministers by traditional inheritance, and are these supported by scriptural testimony?

THEOPHILUS. Teaching, preaching, the administration of the sacraments, and other ordinances of the church; and for this, I must confess our claim is purely traditional. We think it also consistent with scripture, but no where enjoined by it specifically.

ACADEMICUS. When did the custom of state interference with the church commence, and its nomination to the highest offices of Christ's church?

THEOPHILUS. It may be imagined to have been exercised by the popes, as temporal princes, but I believe, never so acknowledged: the only clear instance I know of it is in the Church of England and Ireland, and began at the reformation, about three hundred years ago, and it must be owned is clearly against all scripture and previous practice, but when admitted, seemed clearly expedient and unobjectionable.

HERMIT. This conversation has been protracted to an unusual length; we will resume it to-morrow, if you please. My friends, good night.

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#### SIXTH CONVERSATION.

HERMIT. My friends, I broke off your conversation rather abruptly, last evening, and with some regret, in the middle of a subject, which I hope your excellent memories will enable you to take up at the point where we left off.

THEOPHILUS. I think that I was endeavoring to satisfy Academicus, as to the origin of the head of the state being made the head of the church; I think the first example since the days of Moses, or perhaps of Noah, is that of our church. It has more frequently happened, that the head of the church has been made the temporal head likewise, which has, wherever established in the frail hands of sinful man, ended always in spiritual despotism, superstition, ignorance and error, and the perpetuation of the reign of darkness; the papacy is the last and most fearful example of this. Our substitution of a temporal power to be the head or fountain of spiritual authority, was, at the time of the reformation, our only available expedient, and, so far as we may judge

from the result, it has pleased our Lord to bless us accordingly, and certainly the church has never produced in all the times of its duration, so many able, pious, and learned men, as it has done in this, one of its least branches; and we may thankfully acknowledge that the only spiritual head, our Lord himself, even our one God and King, has blessed the whole nation in this connexion of church and state.

ACADEMICUS. Does this intimate connexion of church and state exist no where else, Theophilus?

THEOPHILUS. I think not so clearly in connexion and union. In Russia the emperor, I believe, assumes authority over the church and in spiritual matters; in Turkey the Sultan, though a Mahometan, has the christian church in bondage and subjection to him; the Greek patriarch must be confirmed in his authority by this infidel, which approbation is, I am told, often subject to intrigue, bargain, and sale.

ACADEMICUS. All christians of every sect, I believe, except Socinians, acknowledge, by mouth at least, Jesus Christ to be head of his church. Does the Church of England profess this?

THEOPHILUS. She acknowledges our Lord to be her spiritual head.

ACADEMICUS. Is he not temporal head, also, of his own church? Was there ever a time when, as God, he was not the spiritual head of all men, and all societies of men?

THEOPHILUS. Certainly, by his special providence, we acknowledge him as our temporal head, and spiritually he has ever been God over all blessed for ever.

ACADEMICUS. And in your view of temporal government by unseen providence, has he not always been the temporal Lord of all the world, whether men know it or not?

THEOPHILUS. Certainly.

ACADEMICUS. Then in this particular, our relations with the Almighty do not seem changed by the christian dispensation.

THEOPHILUS. It would seem so at first starting; but the difference appears to be this. God was pleased to sanctify for his own special dwelling-place, the person of a man, even Jesus Christ, in order, that in that man he might show himself to the world, and by that man as the true way to him, to receive worship and praise from all men, and obedience also, as to a temporal Lord or Ruler;

and, as God, in that man to be adored no longer as an indefinite spirit, but as the living God, manifest or visible; and an object of bodily and spiritual sense, even of the whole man — this is our Lord Jesus Christ, God and man; and as God and man, to be worshipped, glorified, and willingly to become unto by all men.

ACADEMICUS. You have well explained it my friend. Then how does your church, or any church, or any sect, venture to give authority to any other man or being, to be head over the church or any part of the church of this God-man, the only good man?

THEOPHILUS. It is very true, my friend.

~~ACADEMICUS.~~ That it does appear to be without justification, except that as a society of men in continued existence, it must have a visible head, in subordination to him who is not now visible. I pretend not to defend manifest imperfections, for which I see no remedy. I believe our church is subjected to the very best polity for a worldly society; but presume not that it is perfect. Yet possibly as perfect as it could be made, before our Lord's own return in his glorified person.

HERMIT. My friends, I must announce to you, that to-morrow will be Sunday. It is my practice to prepare two sermons from some able divines, to read in our little chapel to such of my neighbors as may choose to assemble for worship; to put these in such language as they can easily understand, and remove all obscure phrases and expressions, costs me generally full two hours; therefore, as I think Academicus has elicited from Theophilus enough to show that the present practice of christian associations is far departed from the scripture standard, I think we may take advantage of Theophilus' ingenious admissions, to make out a tolerable summary of our present position in the question of church government; but it will be much easier to myself to trace it up from its very foundations, and leave you to apply what has passed, as may then suggest itself to you.

RUSTICUS. I was indeed prepared to justify the presbyterian form of church government against the episcopacy of Theophilus, by weapons which he has furnished; but will gladly defer what I had to say, to hear from Mr. Hermit, a regular and connected view of the subject; and then my friends may sooner bring their discussion to a close also — and as our host claims some time to himself this evening to prepare for Sunday's service of worship,



praise and prayer in public, I propose that we now defer the subject until to-morrow evening.

ALL. Agreed.

HERMIT. And may the blessing of our Lord God, even Jesus Christ, be with us all. Amen.

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SEVENTH CONVERSATION.

THEOPHILUS. I thank you heartily, Hermit, for the treat of this day. The first services I have attended in the simple form of a parish church in England, and your congregations were so particularly attentive, and your sermons so well chosen, and the language so plain. I observed also, (which but for our conversations, I should not have observed,) your great care to press the divinity, nay, the full Godhead of Jesus Christ, on their notice; a particular on which our divines speak with reserve and even obscurity too often. I should indeed have fancied a leaning to the New Jerusalem church of Swedenborg, if I had not observed, that in the liturgy, you were careful to use the prescribed ritual literally; and I think you told us, that yourself and others of your congregation have a bishop's license as lay readers. And your prayer for a regularly ordained minister to be given to you by our Lord, by his gracious providence, indicates so decided an attachment to our church, that I do not hesitate to claim you for a true son of England's church.

HERMIT. Perhaps your opinion on this subject may be staggered before next Sunday. But I will not detain you now, by many observations. You spoke of Swedenborg; he was an amiable man, and was undoubtedly favored by some extraordinary spiritual gifts; his sect too are, so far as I have seen them, amiable people all; but his faith and my own are so decidedly the same, as to the fullness of the Godhead, in our blessed Lord and Saviour, (whose name be ever praised,) that I am not surprised that my tenacity on this corner-stone of our faith should have struck you, particularly surrounded as we are by hosts, who under the name of Unitarians and some of the forty sects of Baptists, who have made shipwreck of their faith by stumbling at this rock of offence. But this apostacy renders it only more imperative in us to oppose even our feeble voices against this soul-destroying heresy. We indeed have all of us avowed ourselves as Sweden-

borg did, true Unitarians. We worship one only God, who was manifested in Jesus Christ; the same as the God of Israel, who was manifested in the pillar of a cloud and fire on Sinai, and on the mercy-seat in the Shekina; but we are driven to take shelter under the name of Trinitarians, lest we should be supposed to hold any fellowship with those who deny their Lord, who bought them. But Swedenborg's manifest (to me) error of Hymeneus and Philetus, who, with a great body of Calvinists, delight in spiritualizing away common sense from the language of scripture, and say the resurrection is past already, confounding it with spiritual conversion, independent also of baptism—from these and all other errors of doctrine, faith, and practice, I pray our Lord to preserve us all. True wisdom and true religion is the art of discrimination, to separate the precious from the vile.

ACADEMICUS. I do hope, Mr. Hermit, you will now indulge us with at least, a summary of your views of church government; I think Theophilus has suffered shipwreck in the very act of launching his bark, *church government*, and I am skeptical enough to doubt even your skill to save her.

HERMIT. We had better proceed with our record open before us, and begin at Luke xxiv. 49, and read to the end. We see that the five hundred who witnessed his ascension, at fifty-second verse, worshipped. What? the Jews, who were, and are so tenacious of offering worship to any creature which is due only to God, "They worshipped him." Their law, under the most severe penalties, forbids any worship except to the God of Israel, the Lord of hosts. This then was he, by their judgment, as well as mine; but in verse fifty-three "praising and blessing God;" what God? Even the "Amen." This was the name, the very name of our Lord, as declared to John in his epistle to the church of Laodicea, and I must inform you, is the very name by which he always announced himself in the gospels, the unchangeable name on which alone we might fill a volume. See John iii, where we translate the word amen, the name of the Lord, by the word verily, the meaning of which, is in truth contained in the word amen, and much more. If the word amen had been suffered to stand in our translation of the gospels where it ought to stand, that is, wherever the word "verily" is put for it, then truly would that one word demonstrate the Almight-

ty Godhead of the Amen; even Jesus Christ, (blessed be the name.) See John iii. Nicodemus came to him to know who he was, first acknowledging that God must be with him, or he could not do the works he did. Jesus answered, "Amen, Amen, I say unto thee, &c." which may thus be put, "Amen I, Amen, say unto thee, &c." and so in every other place. Now Nicodemus knew well that this was a name of the God of Israel, by which in all their covenants between God and man, and between man and man, he was invoked to bear witness of their truth, and which when so used, it was used in the same sense to confirm their oaths, and attest their acts and prayers, &c. &c., which we have preserved some remains of in our forms of last will, when we begin them in the name of God, amen. It is also the sign manual of our Lord to attest the authenticity of all the books of the New Testament, being appended thereto by the dictation of the Holy Ghost, except only the epistle of James. By this unchangeable name the Egyptians even knew him, as seen by the numerous times of its recurrence in their tables of hieroglyphics, and I shall not wonder if we find it among the Tartars and Chinese, as it exists among all other nations of the east, and I doubt not, among the Aborigines of this continent, who are, with much reason, believed to be a remnant of the lost ten tribes. After these few remarks on the name "Amen," I will recommend it to Academicus to pursue and trace out this word, in his lucubrations among the heavy tomes he has yet to wade through.

We must, after this slight exposition, wonder at the puerility of our two authorized meanings for it, viz: "Verily," and "So be it." How will you, Theophilus, excuse your priests who are so tenacious of their traditional privileges, and yet have lost and buried the very name of our God under their traditions?

I have hinted at this name before, but here it is necessary to show forth the God of Christians, to whom their worship is due, by the names which he himself assumed, before we speak of the ministry and forms by which we worship him; and the kind of worship is defined by our Lord himself, with all our power, mind, body and soul, person and goods, for these are all his gifts in the first place in our natural father Adam, who lost them by disobedience, to Satan, from whom our blessed Lord and God redeemed them by his own blood. This much I

have deemed it necessary to premise at the outset unequivocally.

THEOPHILUS. My dear Hermit, you have opened to us such an immense new field for research, for deep thought and wonder, that I can hardly fancy that I have ever yet been at school. O what a new and interesting feature does your explanation give to the loud Amen, which each Sabbath echoes through our churches! I never heard a word of this before, but I think you mentioned Tilloch's Essay on the language of the Apocalypse as containing something of the names.

HERMIT. I did so, but on Amen he has not much —

The travellers here interrupted their host, and begged he would proceed to comment further on this most important word, Amen, and would assist them to pursue it in the Bible texts. Much desultory conversation passed, superfluous to repeat. Academicus wished further demonstration that the view Hermit had taken was correct, and Rusticus said he had always almost considered it as a word merely to keep a congregation in time and tune, of scarcely any meaning, and of no import. Such a one as the word "Selah" in the Psalms, for which no meaning was yet found, and therefore it was thought by some to be a musical note, containing no important sense; and Theophilus seemed somewhat mortified that he knew so little about this word, which made him appear in his own eyes, ignorant on a subject on which he thought himself conversant in all the details. Hermit, to gratify his guests, traced the word through all the Bible, and opened to them some of the wonderful mysteries in the book of Revelation, and pointed out that it was not by any peculiar wisdom of his own that he had been able to develope the full meaning, even so far as shown, but that by God's grace and the spirit in him, he had been assisted to the best authorities; that it had not escaped notice even of the Roman papists, who accused our translators of not knowing the meaning of the word, which in their Rheims Testament they rightly preserved for the most part in its unchangeable form. So also the Latin vulgates, and all the Greek versions, and indeed all others, (except the modern translations of Protestants) left this word, Amen, wherever it occurred, in its original Hebrew form, in which form, as he had before told them, it even to this day exists in all the Eastern languages, in Latin and in Greek. Theophilus declared that Hermit's full comments on that one word was worth

the whole expense and trouble of their voyage. Academicus said he thought himself a christian before, now he knew it. And Rusticus said he should never again respond the Amen, without thinking of the Hermit, and he hoped too, more devoutly of his God, even our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

This conversation and Bible research, comparison of versions, &c. &c., took up the whole evening, and they separated. The travellers delighted as much as if they had discovered a mine.

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#### EIGHTH CONVERSATION.

HERMIT. My friends, the snow-storm has set in so seriously that it will be impossible to move out of doors with any pleasure. Breakfast being over, I propose to you to adjourn to my Library, where we shall be undisturbed, either with the occupations of the house, or by visitors. There we can resume our discussion of the principles of church government, and if need be, have there some authorities of note for reference. (The party repaired to the Library.)

ACADEMICUS. I thank you most sincerely Hermit, for this remedy for a bleak and dismal North-American winter's day, and for your evident desire to make our sojourn as agreeable, interesting and instructive as possible. I was so much delighted last night by the manner you treated the one word "Amen," that I fancy now, I then thought myself inspired for the first time with its clear spirit, Truth. But alas! my skeptical or rebel spirit this morning suggests a want of something more. In the very first preaching of the Apostles, not only before but after the gift of the Holy Ghost, there is maintained all through the record of their acts, an ambiguity of expression; and the only doctrine professed by the Ethiopian or propounded by the Apostles was, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, not that he was himself God. You have shown by hundreds of texts and places, that he really was and is the Almighty, the only God, and no one acknowledging the truth of Scripture, can deny it. But at the same time we must confess that the Apostles have every where maintained and inculcated the idea, that the Almighty power of our Lord was a delegated power from another being, who stands in the relation of

a Father to him ; and as a Son, a different being from the Father, to whom (viz. the Father) there can be no question our worship is due, and to none other. For he says his honor will he not give to another, and that he is very jealous of this point. I presume the obscurity occasioned by this dependence of the Son, for being, for power, and for every thing, cannot have been intended as a veil, and as a sort of touchstone of faith, because at the death of this our Lord, the veil was rent, and the Holy of Holies was laid open to men's view ; and ignorant creatures as we are, we seemed forced by necessity, not by presumption, to push our inquiries into the Holy of Holies, viz. into the very nature of God, so to say, which no man, with the fear of God, would otherwise presume to do.

HERMIT. You have touched the only point of real difficulty to Jew and Gentile ; nor can I be supposed to be capable (uninspired as I am, although I believe I have the Holy Spirit, but no supernatural knowledge beyond the written word) to explain how a difference can exist whilst I am maintaining the identity of God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the Son. Nevertheless, I am of opinion that it is a duty we owe each other, to hold our spiritual goods in common, and not to hide from each other as brethren in Christ our Lord, any of our doubts and difficulties, either as to doctrines, precept or practice. What then is revealed? That Jesus Christ was the Son of Mary, a virgin by the Almighty power of God generated, not by a human father. Therefore, as a man, Jesus Christ was the Son of God by a human mother. In this sense he was then the Son of God ; he was not then manifested either as God, or as the temple of God, or as the special dwelling-place which he, God, had built and prepared for himself. But as the legal son of Joseph, and as the real son of Mary, he was truly, according to human modes of speech, son of man, son of David. As a man, (for he maintained his human character till his death,) he was baptized, although spotless (when we speak of baptism we may have some observations to make hereon.) That was the day when the Holy Spirit of Almighty God descended on him, visibly to John at least, and that day was proclaimed as the day on which he was begotten, and as the Son of God, by open voice of God himself. His previous life had been manifested only as a man, in perfect subjection to God, even as all other men ; but from his baptism to his death, he had all the power of God his Father, as proved by his

works. Yet still as son of man he was obedient even unto death, &c. But it would seem only as he himself as the Son, man should ask this power Almighty. Yet he often uses it as his own, without reference to God the Father, because he had received this power from his Father. And he says expressly, whatever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, *I* will do it. Indeed his whole gospel history proves that he was from his baptism (at least) God Almighty, as before shown. But the seeming ambiguity may easily be imagined necessary to prevent the notion among the Jews, that some other God was to be worshipped than he who was revealed at Sinai, when the command was given to worship no other. Nor could he have more openly manifested his Godhead, without banishing from his familiar intercourse all his mortal friends. The indwelling God, whilst in communion with his own creatures, was necessarily veiled by a form that he had assumed, with all the characters of their own bodies; the God within was beyond the ken of the creature, except by his works; his creatures could only speak of him in the human character, as the man Jesus; and the point of faith was to acknowledge that he, as a man, was the Son of God and the only Son of God, and as such was by right of birth entitled to exercise in all its plenitude the power of God his Father. And now, carrying our inquiries into all his works, and the communications from God Almighty as to this his Son, we find, that all the works of the creation, that every attribute and character ascribed to God every where, are attributed to this Son, whose existence spiritually is declared to have been eternal. In speaking of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, in speaking of the glorified man Christ Jesus, now taken into union with the Eternal Spirit, there are not two persons; but two beings they certainly were, making one Christ, that is, God and man, as distinct from each other as the human soul and body, which every man can feel and none explain. Both these may now be said to be absorbed into one Almighty power, which we call God. I fear, my friends, I have succeeded ill, and shall be obliged by any better explanation; for among my congregation are some calling themselves "the christian band," who really do seem to stumble at this point, which I think cannot be got over in any way so well as proceeding to the thousand positive proofs, that this very Son of God, Son of man, is one God to

the glory of God the Father; and if God at all he must be God all in all, and the only God Almighty. Amen.

ALL. Amen.

THEOPHILUS. Well, I must now think we are all quite decided on this grand point of faith and doctrine, and I sincerely hope Academicus will find no more knots until we get through the question now on hand, church-government, which in my view is of little less importance than the points settled. By the by, I have noticed that the christian band you spoke of seem to have gathered into one focus, some Socinianism, much Calvinism, and all the errors of Baptists, with a self-appointed ministry only.

ACADEMICUS. I have read some of the productions of one W. W. Eaton, who gives long extracts from one Alexander Campbell, a great writer, a very clear one, but to me not convincing. This sect, who have assumed that they can reason all the world into one opinion, and that opinion theirs, seems to have derived little knowledge of the nature of man by their close and abstract studies of the word of life. It does appear to me that they are in great error, and I can hardly, off-hand, explain how or wherein. When we have disposed of church government, we may be more at leisure to inquire a little into their peculiarities. Certainly, I think their writers very clever and any thing but superstitious.

RUSTICUS. I have noticed some of this people who call themselves christians. Some of them are decided Arians. Most of them seem to have piety, and tinctured with Phariseeism, and their leaders are very disputatious. They think they can subdue the world to their rule; but they are too sectarian ever to succeed, I should think, on a large scale, nor are they disposed to attend any other than their own meetings, and their own self-elected pastors, and shun even the ordinary church services. Elsewhere, they seem so opinionated as to suppose that all other christians can have nothing to impart; and their faith does not effect the proper attention to the Sabbath, nor among the ignorant of their sect, to common good faith in worldly matters. Their works do not answer their high pretensions, however self-eulogized.

HERMIT. I am glad to have heard your notions on these christians. I confess I see very much to please me in Mr. Eaton's monthly pamphlet, and have really derived much scriptural information from it. We will hereafter discuss this association more closely; in the mean-



time let us proceed with my views on church government in its general signification, as to the dominion, rule or authority vested in certain offices held by certain members, for the ordinary ministration of church ordinances, and the extraordinary administration of the sacraments.

That by the revelation to John, there is a spiritual court in Heaven, viz : ubiquitous, every where present, is clear. Perhaps the pomp of human courts, and of kings particularly, was formed on this divine model, seems to me certain, however known or revealed to men. Our Lord in this Court, in this Kingdom, is King, sole Monarch, so constituted by his indwelling Father. He governs the heavens and the earth ; the spirits and the bodies of all men. But although by his providence, which embraces every contingency of human actions, and makes them subserve his will, yet he *compels* not one spirit in man to worship him and openly to profess his faith in him, which faith I take to be a conviction and certitude that he, our Lord and God, is able and willing, and most certainly will perform all that he has promised to do, and that those promises recorded in holy writ are his truly, and that he will, in his own good time, subdue the spirits and bodies of all men to his only power.

This spiritual Court manifested to John in vision, is, perhaps, the heavenly Jerusalem. I say perhaps, because I believe it is not so said any where in express terms ; but the symbols of the temple find therein their prototype, therefore, as the pattern of the temple is there, that is, or may well be so esteemed, the spiritual, the heavenly Jerusalem, the seat of that government to which all good spiritual christians must be subject.

The holy spirit of our Lord, and our Lord in body is every where, fills the heaven's universal space ; therefore, every where we invoke, we praise, and we worship him, and Almighty power or God in him, and all the world, matter and spirit, must acknowledge him, for in him and by his power only they exist or have any being.

But in a closer and more particular sense he is ever present with his own family, as a parent ; even with all the care and solicitude of the kindest parents : — and of his family are all christians ; not the self-styled, but those who obey his commands, and thus do the will of his Father. As he has promised in those few most impressive words, "*Lo ! I am with you always.*"

I hate strife and controversy, but a word here may at least serve to show my views of this Eternal Presence, this Immanuelism. Some moderns explain this by his general providence, by his universal power. But surely in this sense he has ever been with man, has never left him since the creation. The promise must, therefore, have meant something more than this, "Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of all ages." An example of this special presence, he gave the Apostles, when in spite of bolts and bars, he appeared among his disciples, and convinced even Thomas of his omnipresence; that he is ever present every where, and ever regards with special attention, love and favor his own peculiar people, even those who acknowledge and humble themselves before his Almighty power, who serve, obey and love him in truth, and in simplicity and sincerity of heart. The Lord Jesus then is the head of his church, viz: of his family, in a special sense. He is the Bishop, or overseer, or guardian of our spirits and bodies, even of our souls. This is the first great principle of church government. Nay more, what the world fails to notice, he is our King also, and should be as much acknowledged as supreme in temporal things as he is in spiritual, and as all acknowledge God to be in eternal things. All this, my friends, is as capable of demonstration as any problem in Euclid, from the scriptures; but in these free developments of our opinions, we need not enlarge our discourses with superfluous quotations and verbal criticisms.

He sent his Apostles, not to rule his church and people, for the rule and government he will not give out of his own hands, nor his honor to another, but to teach and minister, to instruct and to serve, because of our child-like weakness; and still the sub-mediatorial ministration was to be continued as among the Israelites, when even Moses greatly feared and trembled at the terrific majesty manifested by the Eternal, Jehovah, even our Lord, and the people begged that he might speak to God for them, and they would do whatever God commanded by the same Moses. Aaron and his family, as a figure of our Lord, was then appointed; but when our Lord appeared to assume his own office, as our prophet and priest, then was the Aaronic priesthood destroyed; it was put to death at the destruction of Jerusalem, and has never since been revived, except in the Satanic usurpation of the early christian pastors, who were seduced by the

power, pomp, dignity and wealth which were offered them by Satan ; they could not withstand the temptation, and fell from their high and far more glorious privileges, even miraculous powers, Mark xvi. — the sure and only signs of true faith on earth ; without these signs of an Apostle no church could be established, Romans i. 11. And thus Paul, not Peter, established the Roman church, by communicating spiritual gifts. See in his Epistles his different style of address to the established churches, and to the saints, with no church establishment. A church so established by Apostolic signs of their commission from our Lord to do so, might extend her cords, and strengthen her stakes, by natural propagation. She may have daughters but no sisters, but those begotten like herself of the Lord by special messengers, or Apostles, or by special gifts, the same thing.

What authority then had the Apostles? In matters of faith all authority, purely spiritual, but no temporal power whatever. They could lead, teach, exhort, but not drive, dogmatize or command, but as they were commanded by our Lord, who has adopted us all into his own family ; members all of his body, by the same bond of affiliation ; and although we be not all sons of the same mother, yet are we of the same father, and as such as much one family as the Patriarchs. Thus, whatever the denomination of a christian, by which a sect may distinguish itself, and I am decidedly averse to calling ourselves by any other name than of Christ, whether of Paul, Apollos or Cephas, still we are all brethren, the spiritual descendants of the Apostles and of Abraham, although forgetting Joseph's advice to his brethren, we fall out by the way.

Personal miraculous powers or gifts ceased, it would seem, very early, or immediately on the decease of the Apostles ; but not so in the congregations or churches of the faithful, and I believe it has pleased our Lord to continue a spiritual communication with many of them even to this our own day. For one such church I have seen myself, heard the last sermon of the pastor, and saw him put into his coffin and grave at the age of eighty-eight ; but very lately in the suburbs of London, under the name of "the House of God," a little society was formed, their minister was really called and chosen by name, by open revelation from the spiritual world ; seven elders, also, all anointed to their office, and also by name appointed by open revelation. These revelations were continued

openly, sometimes in the presence of two hundred witnesses, and often to as few as six or seven, for the most part thrice a day, at morning noon and evening prayer, in different houses for more than four years; their liturgical form of worship prescribed on the model of our Liturgy; and all through much tribulation from the world without, yet free access never forbidden to any in the name of Christ the Lord.

I have had access to many of their records, for which we have even stronger testimony, internal and external, than we have for the holy scriptures.

Near forty years have now elapsed since this church was formed under the direction of special revelation, by messages from the Lord himself, by angelic messengers, and the blessed spirits of men in angel form, their annunciations being, "Thus saith the Lord," "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah," "Thus saith Jehovah," and, indeed, in every form of prophetic annunciation; and generally closed with, "Thus saith the angel of God," and sometimes closed with, "Thus saith the Lord." These messages were always written down from the dictation of the heavenly messenger; and many visions given and verbally described, and even drawn very similar in character, to John's vision, in the Apocalypse, or book of revelation.

I possess, and will show you near a hundred of those messages; many of them are indescribably sublime, but one of them I have by me, given in the presence of the twelve elders (for this little church added other five to the seven divinely named) and their wives, 7th September, 1806, Sunday evening.

"Dearly beloved, who on earth do dwell,  
 Though now in heaven; once I fought with hell;  
 Like you I trembled, and poured out my prayer,  
 And all my griefs, into Jehovah's ear;  
 But final perseverance brought me through—  
 Then loosed from prison, my soul to Jesus flew.  
 Open your eyes, and look within the vail  
 To Him, who hath passed his word to seal  
 Your redemption! O! trust his word,  
 And prove the efficacy of his saving blood.  
 Thus saith the angel of God."

Most of the messages were delivered in verse, some of them near two hours long; this message in particular

caught my eye, among a volume of them, because it explained what I was in some measure before in some uncertainty about, and indeed skeptical. The intermediate state I had always fancied, the beatific vision, to savor of Pagan tradition, — and had been hardy enough to assert it, although I might have learnt better from John himself, in his apocalyptic vision. It pleased God thus to satisfy me. I have found numerous other notices of the same, through other channels, since, and so far my faith is, I believe, more perfect and correct. We will not dwell on these revelations in these last days, but come straight to the conclusion, so far as it relates to our subject. I have been more particular in relating this fact, to meet the infidel spirit which is abroad in all the sects. Almost all deny that any miraculous revelations have been given to men since John's days. But where have we any such notice? On the contrary, what means the promise to be always with us? to give us his spirit to govern and guide us? Sensibly I must suppose, for if merely insensibly by natural means, how can we guard against the mere fancies of men, or suggestions of devils? And the signs that are promised to follow faith, or christian belief, are they not all miraculous? and where is the man now who claims them? Yet if really called by our Lord to his ministry, would they not be so endowed? In the Church of Rome, the Pope ordains without exacting the proofs of faith. In the Church of England, the Queen appoints the bishops, and commands a mock election; the bishops ordain without referring to our Lord at all. The cares of souls are claimed as the property of men. The Presbyterians never refer to proofs of heavenly mission, and are self-called, their synods, assemblies, &c., usurping the powers of the Lord, to send laborers into his vineyard. The sectarians are all self-called, and ordained by like associations, self-appointed, all — all except, perhaps, the Moravians, usurping our Lord's authority. Thus we have dethroned him from his spiritual office as bishop of our souls, even more decidedly than we have from his government as our temporal king. I need not, my friends, pursue this subject into all its ramifications and details, but in truth, if our Lord were now to come in his Father's glory to his kingdom, would he find faith on the earth?

The conclusion, then, is manifest. No minister can be esteemed, or ought to be esteemed as sent by our Lord specially, who has not his sensibly manifested au-

thority to show for it. Two ways are pointed out in scripture, one, miraculous gifts, the other by lot, after proper prayer and fasting in churches established and having spiritual gifts, viz: such miraculous powers. But where is the man who now would dare to put his Lord to this test of his approval, from the Bishop to the meanest Baptist ranter? Well then may we question the divine authority of any of these, from John Inglis to Benjamin Howard, or the numerous absolutely illiterate pretenders of this country and these times. Fear them not, my friends; all such who claim the monopoly of certain ordinances in our Lord's church, are usurpers of our Lord's authority.

**THEOPHILUS.** I will confess, Mr. Hermit, that as you seemed in a former conversation to predict, my faith in your orthodoxy is much shaken. Yet I cannot deny either your premises or your conclusions; and if I had not known that you had never met Academicus before, I should have concluded you had studied in the same school, for you have clearly come to the object of his skeptical cross-questioning two evenings ago. I cannot, however, leave our church entirely without defence. Our bishops, although appointed to their dioceses by royal mandate, must have been already in priest's orders. They are chosen still from the successors to the apostles, by direct descent according to earthly ordinances, unexceptionable, and as appointed by our apostle Paul himself, and as approved by traditional custom; and it is taken for granted, and has been so for now about seventeen hundred years, that there is no further occasion,—therefore our Lord does not vouchsafe miraculous or supernatural notices of his will, since we have now his word open before us, by which that will may be known; and we must not forget, that our church was not founded on even any of the writings of the New Testament, but was purely traditional for some ages. In this it is the very reverse of the Hebrew church, as founded by Moses, in whose law, I believe, a divine precept was given for every case that could happen to an Israelite; and unless found written in that law, was of no obligation. Not so we. Christ is our law, his word our gospel,—and this was handed down in the church by tradition, and by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. The books of the New Testament, you know, were not written, even Matthew's Syriac Gospel, (not now in existence,) for twelve or fourteen years after our Lord's resurrection. The book of

Revelations, which seems to have been published before all the others, until about the year 60; and the rest between this and the year 67 or 69, except John's Gospel and Epistles, which might have been as late as 90 or 95. But it is well known that the christian religion was known and preached in all the then known world long before those last-named days, and that the gospels and epistles in their present shape did not exist for many years afterwards, and many of the books did not exist at all in many of the churches, — and in some of them, perhaps, none at all; and this state of things exists at the present day in many churches in the east, where the faith in our Lord and his gospel is still upheld by tradition, for the most part, or by books scarcely readable by the priests themselves. It is, therefore, absurd to expect precise rules of conduct to be laid in those books, for every social and religious duty in detail; this knowledge was given to every church at its establishment; a church could not then be established without direct authority from the Lord by the holy spirit. But the original churches being established, and the gift of the spirit once communicated to it, was left as shown in Mark iv. to propagate itself by purely natural means, aided by the insensible operations of the holy spirit, not by supernatural means, until our Lord shall again come in the glorious majesty of the eternal power almighty, to establish a new dispensation.

I shall mention three well-known cases; women partake of the sacramental supper: we christians of gentile origin, keep the first of the week holy instead of the seventh, and infants are baptized into the name and family of our Lord. For none of these usages of the church catholic, have we any unequivocal or indisputable authority in the New Testament; but common sense and tradition justify fully all these customs of the church. So also I must maintain of the priesthood, the holy orders are of apostolic origin, established at first, by divine authority, and continued by traditional usage through every generation, according to rules then established by the apostles and by our Lord's own authority, even down to the present day, and hour, and all such I must esteem to have our Lord's own authority for their ministry, even without other special signs of their calling thereto.

HERMIT. I hope, my friend Theophilus, that Academic will answer your ingenious defence of the ministry,

in every one of your positions. I myself, have much more to say, but now would prefer listening.

ACADEMICUS. My friend Theophilus and I, have never before been so determinately at issue, and indeed I think his arguments for episcopal orders so unsatisfactory, (although I believe them to be the best current justification at present urged in their defence,) that even I, who rather seek to get than to give information, and can presume to no profound knowledge, shall find little difficulty in refuting the reasoning urged. Since my friend Hermit has imposed this task on me, I must be allowed to proceed in my own humble way, colloquially. Pray, Theophilus, has the Roman church this divine ministry?

THEOPHILUS. So far as the human succession to the apostles goes, they certainly have.

ACADEMICUS. Does this succession give full authority for the monopoly of the administration of the ordinances and sacraments, this right being supported by traditional usage, and not by gospel testimony, as in the written word?

THEOPHILUS. Had they not corrupted the traditional testimony, and apostatized from the primitive simple faith and practice, both in their professions of faith and administrations of the ordinances, I should think their divine right to exercise all the offices and privileges of the ministry unquestionable.

ACADEMICUS. You have not my dear Theophilus answered my question, but have begged another.

THEOPHILUS. You have placed me in a dilemma; for if I answer unequivocally, yes or no, in either case I give testimony against my own position; for if their authority is from our Lord, why do we reject their ministry? If not, it destroys *our* claim to divine authority likewise: but I have limited my answer, so as to make their apostacy a sufficient reason for denying their divine authority, without questioning their human descent.

ACADEMICUS. Then the apostacy or falling away from the true faith, is reason enough for breaking the chain of apostolic succession, as to any rights or privileges they might otherwise rightly claim?

THEOPHILUS. I am forced to affirm this.

ACADEMICUS. These ministerial rights and privileges then, so far as they depend on the apostolic succession, were justly considered as being usurpations on our Lord's



authority at the reformation, and long before, and the claim of the Roman ministry to them, justly rejected?

THEOPHILUS. Yes.

ACADEMICUS. Then, if they had no rightful authority, they could transmit none?

THEOPHILUS. I am forced to concur in this. I consider the line of pure tradition interrupted by apostacy.

ACADEMICUS. Then whence have our priesthood the authority they claim?

THEOPHILUS. There does indeed, at first view, seem some inconsistency here, but I must be allowed to explain, that even as a sinner may repent, and turn again to the Lord, and then would stand in his original calling, even so the ministry, repenting of their apostacy, may resume their standing in holy orders; thus we do not ordain over again a Roman priest who embraces our reformed faith and practice. The church of England is the church purged of its popish errors, and has therefore all the rights and privileges of the original divine calling. And so would the papal church; it might yet live, if it would turn from its wickedness.

ACADEMICUS. Now my good Theophilus, you have shifted your ground, and taken up a new position; we had better defer our debate until to-morrow: our host's time is past.

HERMIT. God bless you, my friends. Theophilus' chain having been broken by Academicus, we shall have little difficulty with the other topics: so good night to you all.

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#### NINTH CONVERSATION.

HERMIT. My friends, the day is still boisterous and gloomy; perhaps the continuation of our spiritual inquiries may be more agreeable than physical amusements, to which, in such weather, there is perhaps little temptation.

RUSTICUS. I hope our friend Theophilus will contend no longer for the exclusiveness of episcopal ordination as to any privileges, as regards men, their brethren, both as men and christians; whether those peculiar privileges be spiritual or temporal; nor do I see exactly, how the presbytery became possessed of similar self-claimed privileges, and with the right to ordain to the ministry, and to give to that ministry peculiar rights and privileges. And less still can I see how any other self-constituted bodies of men can transmit rights, which them-

selves have not. Correct me, my friends, if I am wrong, but to me it seems that Calvin and his accomplices either claimed the right to ordain to the presbytery by divine appointment, or by inheritance through the papacy, which had apostatized, or it was an usurpation of authority which he had not of right by succession, and neither of these (except the first, I think both Academicus and Hermit seem to think,) are sufficient, or can justify any men in assuming any peculiar authority, spiritual or temporal, and they leave all men free, to submit to their authority or not, as seemeth good, right, or meet, to them. In short they are usurpations, and men are free to receive or to reject their yoke, so that no man, or body of men, woman, or body of women, can have any right to assume for themselves, or to nominate others to take on themselves the government or direction of any generation of men or christians, but by the direction, immediate and sensible, of our Lord himself, who has (if I understand the nature of the arguments, which have been somewhat diffuse,) promised signs, sufficiently sensible to all generations, of his special approval, if in good faith this be sought; if so, the question of rightful church government is in a nut-shell. Thus I presume that "the house of God," in Walworth, London, was properly constituted, (its congregation,) a church by our Lord's authority, as mentioned yesterday, by Hermit, both minister, and ministering elders being appointed, and specially nominated (by name) by our Lord's authority, communicated by a special and heavenly messenger, even "the angel of God." Yet I must presume from the peculiar temper of the times, that the special mission of Eliás Carpenter, (the minister in question,) would not have been acknowledged by any pope, or head of any established church in Christendom, nor would he have received ministerial orders from any, on this legitimate plea; so that if our Lord be pleased to act independent of the shackles of human tradition, they will reject him, and will not have this man to rule over them. This "house of God" was, I suppose, an independent church, and says much for that sect or denomination. Are my conclusions correct, Mr. Hermit?

HERMIT. We are all very much obliged to you, my dear Rusticus, by your very pretty summary of the evidence contained in our conversations; but I fear that the independents, although very right in many things, may not be quite so in all; the subject has been very

well elucidated by Dr. Owen, who was Cromwell's chaplain, and chancellor of Oxford. To his writings I must refer you all: he has fully treated the subject in every view of it that can be taken.

THEOPHILUS. What! Mr. Hermit, do you conclude then, that there are no churches in Christendom, properly and legitimately constituted and established?

HERMIT. I confess I know not one. Do you, my friend Theophilus, know of any? if you do, describe them. I have not yet spoken of the senseless declaration required by every sect and denomination for holy orders, that they believe they have a call from the Holy Ghost to the office, because this piece of presumption is, I believe, common to all, without exception, and therefore no argument from any one in particular can be drawn from it; in this I think even the independents are included.

THEOPHILUS. Surely, Mr. Hermit, there must be some legitimate mode, in your mind, of subjecting bodies of christians to church rule and government?

HERMIT. Dr. Owen has explained his views on the subject fully; I have views somewhat differing in method, not, I think, in principle; but before we enter on that, I fear your orthodox prejudices, my dear Theophilus, must submit to another shock, as the result of our conversations so far, which is, that the present race of ministers, bishops, priests, and deacons, who have assumed a dominion over the consciences of Christ's heritage, are usurpers; that they have imposed on all denominations of christians, a spiritual despotism most grievous, the which to exercise or submit to, is superstition, not religion; so much the more fearful, as one and all, they appear to be brought into the ministry, or rather rule over Christ's heritage by Satanic influence and agency; for the most part this is demonstrable, for we all admit that papacy in all its branches is antichristian, therefore Satanic. The bishops in our own church, for the most part, are chosen by, and for their political influence, or by pure favoritism — the powers of this world; surely this is Satanic. Our priests are, or may be, nominated to cures of souls, because the advowson is the gift, or the property of themselves, or some friendly patron. A genteel subsistence, rather than the salvation of souls, are, in our church, the motives to an education for, and dedication to the ministry, so that mammon and not Christ is their tutelary God.

Of the self-appointed sectarian ministers, they are many of them punitanical enthusiasts, setting up a species of will-worship, and submission to spiritual influences, of which they have no assurance (sensible or available to others) that they are not diabolical, and many of them may be demonstrated to be so, if tested by the sword of the Spirit. This is indeed a woful but not an exaggerated picture; for if our Lord were to come even this day, where would he find faith on the earth?

ACADEMICUS. My dear Hermit, many of my very best thanks for coming so readily and boldly to the just conclusion of the matter. My friend Theophilus and I, should have beat round the bush for two or three days before we should have decided, if indeed we ever could have so decided. But pray, my good Hermit, do answer Theophilus' question, if it be only to let him down as easy as you can.

THEOPHILUS. Nay, my friend Academicus, we must not be too hasty, as I confess I was in asking Hermit to explain his views of the right mode of establishing christian associations, or churches, and subjecting them to lawful and scriptural discipline and government; the manner of choosing ministers; the authority and privileges, and orders, of such ministry, which seem to be the points on which we all desire some light. The doctrines themselves, are subjects of quite another description, however intimately connected they may be with church government and discipline. Before Hermit is pleased to indulge us by answering my last question to him, I would bring the case of the episcopalian church of the United States under your observation, in which all the objections of the Congé d'Elire, or mock election of the bishops, the royal mandate for their consecration, the human or temporal property, maintained in the cures of souls in every parish and congregation of the church of England, and other symptoms of Satanic influence in the appointments of ministers of Christ's flock, as so very strongly noticed by Hermit, are, it would seem, all remedied. This American daughter of the English church, seems to me perfectly purified and purged from those objections which were the result of necessity in the peculiar circumstances of the times of the reformation. Our reformers were to choose between pope and king, as their head; and although this was, perhaps, in Hermit's view, but "out of the frying-pan into the fire," yet the results on the whole, have been glorious to our church, who may safely challenge the world for exam-

ples of true piety, scriptural learning, and christian charity, in her ministry, and so judging of the tree by the fruits, we might well question the judgment which Hermit has so forcibly pronounced as to that ministry, coming into their offices by Satanic influence.

But if for argument's sake, the truth of the allegation be admitted, as regards the church of England, it can by no means apply to her American daughter in the United States; yet I admit freely, that to her younger daughters, or colonial bishopricks, similar objections do lie.

The peculiarity then of the American episcopal church is, that it is incorporated as a temporal association or body corporate, having the right and power granted them to form for themselves, laws for their own spiritual government, and appointment of ministers, &c. &c., and are recognized as a body corporate by the States. I do not think Hermit had this American church in his eye, when he pronounced that fearful judgment as to satanic influence.

HERMIT. It is very true, Theophilus, that the severe conclusion which I could not evade, as applying so manifestly to the church of England, does not so evidently apply to her fair American daughter. But the grand objection does so; the ordination of ministers takes place with them, on the mere confession or declaration of the candidate that he has a call, or is called by the holy ghost to take the office in question on him, and no sensible manifestation of our Lord's approval is ever sought. This defect did not escape the amiable, and wise, and truly apostolic bishop White, at the suggestion, I believe, of the very learned and good man, Granville Sharpe. But it must be presumed that it was a stone too heavy to lift in these times of universal apostacy. The existing generation of ministers dared not to encounter the ordeal. They dared not subject their own orders to the risk of our Lord's declared will by the lot, and therefore could not make it their rule in future cases. Therefore, like all the rest, they enter not the fold by the door, but by climbing the wall, as all the other sects do. They are usurpers, and not of the family of the true shepherd, and in this sense, scripturally thieves and robbers. Nevertheless, we must admit that the charge of satanic influence is not so manifest in the American church as in her mother of England. As for your challenge in favor of your church, Theophilus, for charity, piety and learning,

I am free to acknowledge the claim of your hierarchy to the warm eulogium, and it has long been a matter of wonder and grateful thanks, that our Lord has by his grace and overruling providence, caused a tree, planted in foul corruption, to produce so much good and pleasant fruit. It must, however, be confessed that it also produces much that is nauseous, bitter, and quite rotten.

**RUSTICUS.** Why, friend Theophilus, I was really admiring your able advocacy of the American church, and was preparing to put in a claim for the Calvinistic churches founded by the pilgrims in New England, but to my astonishment, I perceive you have come out of this, with scarcely a less fatal discomfiture. I am afraid therefore, to venture any panegyric on the puritan fathers in New England and their churches, for all seems to end in decided usurpation of authority over our Lord's heritage. What says Academicus?

**ACADEMICUS.** I have been only wondering how Hermit manages to come to such unerring conclusions on grounds so clear, and manifest and simple; and how blind we all seem to be. For to me, it now seems clear that no sect of christians seems to have much to boast over others, except the united brethren, (Moravians,) and that all have many errors from which they must recede, before we can have any hopes of general agreement, and that the itch for discriminating doctrines formed into prescribed rules of faith and practice lead us astray. The simple and single truth of all power, might, majesty, and dominion being now vested in the person of Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father, in him only manifested, and the single rule of implicit submission to his government, in its childlike simplicity, seems the only creed and the only rule of practice christians need profess. Agreeing in these fundamentals, there would be no room for any difference of opinion. But to carry this principle out into practice, we must beware of settling or deciding any differences by human authority, or by majority of voices; but in all subjects of doubt or difference, we must refer to our Lord himself to decide. Then and then only shall we become one fold, and have only one shepherd.

**RUSTICUS.** Although this does seem necessarily to flow from Hermit's reasoning, yet I confess I cannot see how we are to get our Lord's decision on any question, however important; for I believe it is a point now granted by all sects of christians, that the days of miracles are

passed. There is now no open vision, or prophecy in Israel; there is nothing to be added to the canon of scripture, as it is published, no new revelation to be of any authority among christians, since the close of the Apocalyptic vision of John, which is the last revelation to be expected by men, until the second coming of our Lord in glory; and indeed the denunciation at the end of that vision, "If any man shall add to the words of this book," &c. &c., has been interpreted to man, that if any shall presume to publish, or even to receive any new revelation, that is, any heavenly or spiritual communication, he will be subject to the imprecation quoted. Before Hermit explains his views of church government, I should much like to hear his opinion on these points, viz: What foundation has the belief that our Lord will not now dispense the power of working miracles; that his operations in spiritual and temporal affairs, is now by his providence, (general providence,) only; that no revelations from him are now necessary or to be expected; that in truth, we are now left to our own management and judgment, and are assured he will not now meddle with us, by special, that is, by a miraculous providence; that the modern popular notion of deciding all questions by majorities in all deliberative assemblies, is the most pure and the most agreeable to Divine Will; that in short, *vox populi vox Dei*, that is, that the voice of the people as the voice of God may safely be assumed as the fact in religion and politics. This is a subjects of deep importance in our inquiries. I trust, therefore, Hermit will give us the advantage of his experience in these particulars.

HERMIT. Although these questions, in the course of our conversation, have received some casual notices which have caught the observation of Rusticus, it is as well, perhaps, to come as soon as we can to some decision on the principles involved in them. We may safely, I think, refer to the experience of the whole race of mankind, and more especially to Christendom and Mahomedom, (to make a new word,) to all their legends, fairy tales, experiences and fables, that there have been spiritual communications from the invisible world of our Lord's kingdom in heaven, or from powers therein, (besides those recorded in the holy scriptures,) in all ages, both before and since our Lord's advent in humility as the Saviour of the world. But perhaps our friend Academicus would be unwilling to admit, that an almost universal credence is sufficient testimony on which to found unde-

niable doctrines or opinions of the truth of facts. I fancy, however, that no historian has ventured to deny all supernatural appearances, or miraculous agency in the affairs of men, before the days of Jesus Christ our Lord. Of this I doubt not we are all agreed without further question. The oldest historians are full of relations of the kind, and Balaam and his ass, the oracles of the pagans, their auguries, Homer, Numa and his nymph, (Eugeri,) or familiar, Saul's law against witches, the witch of Endor, Brutus' Pharsalian ghost, and innumerable others, are enough to prove that such things were. Nay, we have the undoubted testimony of holy writ to the effect. Pharaoh, in the case of Abraham's wife, Abimelech, in the case of Isaac's wife, the whole history of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, Sennacherib, the Ninevites and Jonah, and Jonah's shipmates, all must convince impartial and reasonable men, that almighty power, which we personify under the name God, has not failed to manifest himself, or itself, in all the ages of the world, to (I believe) all the sons of men in various ways, before our Lord's days in the flesh, and that these various ways are, or may be, all classed under the operations of the Father, that is, naturally in the works of the creation and by general providence; by the Son, the word supernaturally, by extraordinary appearances or works, as to the Israelites at their Exodus, to Noah, to Abraham, in the temple, until the Babylonish captivity, and afterwards to Ezra and others, and lastly, in the extraordinary births of John Baptist and our Lord, and thirdly, by the holy spirit in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David and the prophets, all which modes of manifestation are declared throughout to be the work or operations of one and the same almighty and eternal power, or God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all manifested under one name and in one person, even Jesus the anointed saviour and mediator, appointed as the only being to whom, and in whom, and through whom, all worship, praise, prayer, and thanks can be addressed to, or received by the only one God who fills the universe. This is a mere recapitulation of the only one object of the christian faith both before and after the first coming of our Lord in human flesh, as son of man and son of God. I have been more diffuse in this summary of the evidence of God's special intercourse with men in the first 4000 years of the creation than I intended, but perhaps not more than necessary to draw our attention to the analogies observa-



ble between those times and the times of this dispensation in 1841 years from that grand epoch ; at which time I find it to be the common doctrine among christians, that no direct communication from God to man, by open revelation or prophecy, or miraculous powers, other than those contained in the holy scriptures, the works of the creation, and by the government of general providence, are now wrought, or ought to be expected, and that the only mode of judging whether this arises from the active principle of good, or from the permitted agency of evil, can be known by the results, by their fruits, to which alone all the blind guides of every christian sect, boldly and fearlessly appeal, all denying that God will now vouchsafe any other guidance ; that although our Lord himself has declared in Mark xvi. that miraculous powers shall follow true faith, yet christians declare positively that such a promise will not be fulfilled. This absurdity, this denial of the truth of the gospel, is common to all sects ; and even in that little church which was noticed in a preceding discourse in London, in Walworth, whose minister was Elias Carpenter, although they were by divine and angelic communication assured of the same powers, by a reference to Matthew x. for their commission, yet was there not one man with faith enough to assume the miraculous powers then bestowed on them as on the disciples in our Lord's time. Nevertheless, the Lord himself has not failed in every generation of men (I believe) since his ascension, to maintain a supernatural and spiritual communication with some of his servants in all the modes of spiritual communion with the invisible or spiritual world, viz. by dreams, visions, prophecies and supernatural personal appearances, I believe, in every part of christendom and in the world. And had the history of those revelations been as carefully recorded for our instruction, we should not have been split into so many sects as now we are, nor need we now be so, for the Lord has declared that he himself will decide every question of difference which may arise. Thus the question of the Arian heresy was decided by the shameful yet miraculous death of Arius, as recorded by Eusebius. The miraculous cross of Constantine is a fact as well authenticated as any in history ; the miraculous and prophetic gifts to Paul, Agalus, Philip's daughter, the spiritual gifts to the Corinthian and other churches, the gift of speech to the African martyrs after their tongues were cut out, all of these well-substantiated facts occurred af-

ter the times now assumed as the period or epoch when miracles ceased. My belief is, that in every church, every age, and every country where the gospel has been preached, and perhaps elsewhere, there have been men with peculiar spiritual gifts, besides those which may be called the ordinary gifts of the holy ghost, conveyed by or at our baptism, or however conveyed to man, whether before or after baptism, or altogether independent of it; that there have been such persons in every age and country; but as the christian faith is now our subject, so would I limit the application of my observations now to christians.

Truth was so mingled with error, with falsehood and fable, in all the legends of the dark ages of the thousand years, in the which the reign of antichrist and ignorance was firmly established in the earth, that we cannot safely appeal to any histories of those times. The legendary tales of those times have all, or almost all of them, a supernatural origin, or wonderful object. Since the days of what is called the reformation, christendom has, I believe, been favored with many great and shining lights; many of whom met with a reception in the world purely apostolical. Nevertheless, the reception they met with in the world is not the standard by which we are to try them in our conversations. There were sectarians who introduced heresies into the church very early. The sect, the puritanical sect of the Essenes, made way for the errors of the Gnostics, who attempted to establish angelic purity on earth, and would have banished all legal sexual intercourse from the earth. They attempted, and in part succeeded, in establishing a system of factitious purity on earth, depending only on their standard of branding all sexual intercourse as contrary to the spirit of the gospel. This spurious christianity has left its marks on every branch of the church to this day, and has legalized whoredom and every evil consequent on it, which has branded every christian establishment with the character of the scarlet whore of Babylon. You, my friends, who have travelled, will perhaps have observed, what in the days of my own youth could not escape me, that the christian principle of social communion of the sexes carries in its train a system of whoredom and immorality which every pious christian must deprecate even to this hour. It results from the spurious christianity or Gnostic notions in the earliest days. It has introduced the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans, which our

Lord hates, libertinism in sexual intercourse, women in common, or common women, the characteristic badge of christianity all the world over, where christendom has any foothold or influence on sexual morals.

The next heresy, even in the days of the apostles, was the Corinthian, the first step to the sensual heaven of Mahommed. The next was Montanism, lately revived by Irving. Judging by this last, they had decided supernatural spiritual gifts, but both seem to have fallen into gross delusion. It is not my object to enter into the character of those heresies, if heresies they were, but merely to establish the fact, that in those days it was asserted and maintained by most christians, that our Lord or God did govern the world by a special providence, which could be influenced by the prayers of the saints, and by a supernatural or miraculous agency. All the institutions of Romanism assert this, and the whole Greek church still maintain it. At the reformation, or religious revolution, when we broke loose from the trammels of superstition, as we supposed, and introduced a species of rationalism into religion, one of the first errors we fell into, was the mistaking every pretence to supernatural guidance by the gifts of the holy spirit for superstition, and so branding it. But our Lord has never left himself without witnesses. The principal and leading characters were not those witnesses. The Waldenses, the Hussites, the Lollards, the Jansenists, I believe had many members so gifted; but Jacob Boehman and other highly-gifted characters in Germany, Madame Bourignon and the Jansenists in France, many in England, and particularly lady Jane Lead, perhaps as learned and pious a woman as ever lived, down to Richard Brothers, and a host of others about 1792, then Joanna Southcott, Thomas Dowland, Joseph Prescott, Elias Carpenter, George Turner, to 1807 and 1814, and the Irvingites, to 1840. I do not mean now to enter into any history of those people, but mention them as being the instruments through whom very much intercourse has lately been, or said to have been, held with the invisible world of spirits, viz. our Lord's heavenly and spiritual kingdom, in which we have numerous prophecies and new revelations, all of a character perfectly agreeable and analagous to those in the scriptures; and I trust Rusticus will be satisfied with this superficial gloss over the history of supernatural influence, or miraculous agency in the affairs of men, leaving untouched the promises of our Lord that these never should cease.

RUSTICUS. My dear Hermit, you have disposed of my first question very satisfactorily, but in so doing you have started fresh game, new subjects. Your observations about Gnosticism, Balaam, Nicolaitans, sexual communion, these are all to me complete mysteries; but this seems to be your way. Before digressing on these new fields of discussion, perhaps I had better offer no remarks until you have concluded your observations on the next point, the vox populi.

ACADEMICUS. And we, Theophilus and I, are determined not to interrupt Hermit until he shall have given his notions on this point so important in the affairs of men; for who does not see that this vox populi, the voice of the people, is the new potentate who has fixed his dominion on the earth. But are we prepared to say this is vox Dei, the voice of God?

THEOPHILUS. I must claim attention to one remark in favor of the miraculous powers still existing in the church, exemplified in the conversion of sinners by preaching the gospel. The conversion of a single sinner to true faith and repentance, is as great a miracle as can be wrought under heaven; and this power still exists in the church, and is the fruit by which Christ's ministers must be judged, whether they are commissioned by our Lord.

ACADEMICUS. This power and this sign, my dear Theophilus, exists or is claimed by the ministry of every sect; and who can judge of such a work, a purely spiritual work, beyond the ken of man in mortality? What some sects call conversion, (papists, for example,) others call delusion and error: do you claim this for the apostolic succession only?

THEOPHILUS. Certainly, Academicus; I urged this without sufficient thought. I see the weakness of such a plea, but it is often urged, and I could not let it pass without notice; but I see such a notion will not serve my exclusive ideas as to apostolical authority, by that succession called apostolical. I am forced, therefore, to abandon it. Go on then, good Hermit, with your remarks on the vox populi; show us how men may be brought to act as by one mind, which even the vox populi cannot effect. Show us why the opinion of the majority should be adopted by the minority, when the minority may be most right. Is the voice of the majority in any assémbly a true or just standard of truth or wisdom?

HERMIT. I hardly know how to treat this subject sufficiently compendiously to avoid obscurity. Excuse

me, therefore, my friends, if I be a little tedious. We will in the first place consider the voice of the multitude when so numerous as to exclude deliberation, such as exemplified in Lynch law, or in Milton's Pandemonium. A multitude knows no law but caprice; their sole will; reason and truth are the last things listened to. The hellish arguments of demagogues artfully addressed to the feelings, and sometimes to the worst feelings of our nature, and the voice of clamor, are only heard in a multitude who pretend to deliberate or to judge. In such a case the voice of the people is the voice of the devil, not of God. This I think needs no argument, for no man who has ever seen this mobocratic principle in action can be of another opinion. But all men assume that they have equal rights — are, in fact, equal; and as to affairs which relate to all, each member should have equal weight. Yet in such a multitude there may be but a few, or not more than one wise man, to whose judgment it would be wise to defer. And in truth, on the very principle of independence of creatures upon each other, and of equality of rights, no majority, however numerous, have any more natural right to impose a law on the minority, than the minority have to impose a law on the majority — no, not even in the case where the minority may be a single individual, and particularly when that individual alone of the whole mass may have knowledge, wisdom and discretion. This cannot be denied. How then remedy the confusion which must arise from the infinitely divided opinions which must exist in a multitude where the individuals may be very unequally endowed in the three things which we have assumed may exist in one individual, knowledge, wisdom and discretion? Or say that more than one may be superiorly endowed — should we not say that this multitude would act most wisely in forming themselves into a corporate body by electing this one man their head, and choosing the others to offices in that body, whose duties they were qualified to fulfill? One body can have but one head, even if that have different members, hands, eyes, nose, mouth and ears. But if that multitude be numerous, different members may be required to perfect the body politic. Men by their very nature are forced so to congregate and associate, if they mean to be governed or to govern themselves efficaciously and wisely for their mutual benefit and comfort.

Without multiplying words or dilating on this subject,

see you not that such a man with almighty and perfect endowments does exist, and is a candidate for the exclusive government of every association of men, large or small, and for whatever purpose associated, which has the good of the individuals composing it for its object? even Jesus Christ, the Son of God himself, in whom dwells the fulness of the godhead bodily, and he, we know, and he only is able and willing to govern us so as to secure to every individual member the greatest possible good to which he or she is capable of attaining; and he only is known to be capable of effecting this the true object of every association. But he will not accept the office, although his by creation, inheritance, purchase, and every title, unless he be most willingly elected to it, nor will he share this charge with an other of God's creatures. Christians for the most part acknowledge this, and that all their endowments are indeed from him; but it somehow happens that they generally act as if they thought human aid, and sometimes indeed as if diabolical aid, were necessary to him. In vain does he in person, and still by his word established for ages as the alone truth — in vain I say does he invite mankind to elect him as their sole monarch, for by their actions they declare they will not have this man to rule over them in worldly nor even in spiritual matters, as if his power did not extend to this earth. Nay, even in spiritual associations we still deny him the sole rule; and have even deprived him of the nomination of his own, ay, of every one of his own officers or servants. Nay, we presume to excuse ourselves by assuming that he is unable or unwilling to make known his choice, even if he have any, and therefore we fancy, or assume that he is pleased to give the privilege of appointing even his own household to Satan or to the world, and yet by a most strange inconsistency, we suppose that he will immediately give to these servants thus imposed on him the exercise of his power and distribution of his grace or favors. This is true mobocracy. We have no objection to elect him our bishop or even our king, provided his people be allowed to rule over him; thus subjecting the head to the government of the members, figuratively set forth as the flesh, (of which all the members are composed,) and therefore the three-fold enemy of God and man is said in scripture to be the world, the flesh, and the devil. The world may be defined to be the love of worldly influence and dominion, even beyond our capacity to use our limited powers. The flesh

may be said to be the disposition in the members, the flesh, selfish sensualism, to rebel against the head, viz. the spirit and Satan may be said to be that disposition to evil which employs artfully the two former elements to rebel against the restraints to which the love of good would inculcate; an impure spirit which ever urges to independence of the individual, and the equal privileges of all the sons of God and of Adam; more particularly as a motive to interminable division, ever the object of Satan, and an enmity most determined to every social principle that leads to universal love and union, the true object of all true religion and politics, and into which this impure spirit ever intrudes himself to mar.

I fear, my friends, I am too diffuse, but I know not how to avoid it. You have heard much of this before; but I do indeed intend now to apply it to answer the questions of Rusticus, but cannot now extend this conversation, as our time-glass is run out.

ACADEMICUS. My dear Hermit, although the remarks are indeed not quite novel from you, yet you are now placing them in a new and practical light, and I could sit until to-morrow night with pleasure, to draw water from your well; but we must not now trespass further. Good night.

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TENTH CONVERSATION.

*By the Log-fire, as usual.*

RUSTICUS. Before our worthy and hospitable host recommences his lecture, we should mention that we begin to feel uneasy lest we may be found to trespass too much on his hospitality. Say, good Hermit, are we not pressing your civility too far? This is, I believe, ten days since we arrived, and I see no prospect of an end to our conversations: nay, so far from it, every one seems to break ground for ten more.

HERMIT. I rejoice in your society, my friends, and it is no use travelling in this country at this season, when we have no allurements for travellers at all. But I must propose to extend your amusements to induce some physical exercise as well as spiritual. This, to young men, is wholesome, improves their faculties, and is necessary. I will therefore make a bargain with you. Go forth and furnish our board with game, which our forests supply in

abundance, and talk not of shifting your quarters for a month.

ACADEMICUS. A thousand thanks, my dear Hermit, for your suggestion. We will waive all superfluous compliments, and with delight take advantage of you, at least, until we have completed the awful month of January with you.

HERMIT. A bargain then ; and not to waste words, let us proceed to decide the legality of the vox populi, assuming the powers of legislation and government in any community, spiritual or temporal. Are we agreed that if we four and neighbor Freeborn were thrown together on an isolated spot, any three of us would have no more right to impose any restraint, laws or regulations on the other two, than those two have to impose any such on the other three ; nor that any four of us have any more right to impose restraints or laws on the remaining one, than that one on the four ? that is, are we agreed that there is no natural inherent authority in a majority of members to govern a minority in an association of men for any purpose whatever ?

ACADEMICUS. For myself, Hermit, I must say that I feel my spirit is or ought to be quite free from the authority of any man, that is mere man, man only, as being unendowed with any special authority from the author of my existence. I have however some doubts how far parental authority, and that only in perfect keeping with my principle, should be considered absolute. But certainly no other natural authority seems to claim subsequence or obedience. But what says our friend Theophilus to this, who claims much for the ministers of religion and for kings, or authority by inheritance, of a sensible or worldly nature only ? The word authority, in the abstract, I take to be purely spiritual, therefore not transmissible by natural descent, reserving still the question of paternal authority by natural right.

THEOPHILUS. Being thus called on, I must confess that I am only disposed to question the principle, inasmuch as I do not see how we are to bring the opinions of men to an infallible standard, unless all men agree to succumb to some definite rule of judgment, and if they will not agree on this, I see no remedy but to refer to the only tangible method, which at first view, reason decides for, in favor of a majority of voices : when all agree to abide by the voice of the majority of a deliberative body, then that majority is the rule agreed on. In truth, I see a multitude of difficulties in the way ; for instance, grant-



ing that the majority of a deliberative body shall be considered law by that body, how was that body itself formed from the community? and why may not that deliberative body, whose decisions are to be law, be a single individual? But this the experience of the world decides against as a dangerous tyranny: if the deliberative body be composed of more than one, then the experience of the world decides against it as a fearful oligarchy. Therefore I confess I do not see how we are to proceed unobjectionably on all sides, but by reducing society to its first principles, and referring all questions to a majority of voices. But against this rise all the fearful objections of mad democracy, or mobocracy; but in associations purely spiritual, a remedy seems to me to be furnished by the apostolic succession, whereby a certain number of men were first named by divine authority, and empowered to transmit their powers, by any rule, to all succeeding generations, to persons whose judgments in spiritual matters shall be considered as of divine authority. This again, if I were to advance, the papist would thank me, and say this is precisely the papal rule. If I would subdivide the authority among the bishops, then I see no better way of bringing them into sensible obedience to certain rule than the church of England has adopted; and this, my friend Academicus, would soon show, as indeed he has made me confess, that even this is defective, and partakes of the evils of papal despotism and sectarian confusion. Therefore I confess myself in a labyrinth, out of which I cannot find my way, unless our Hermit shall furnish me the clue. Therefore, although I see many objections to the theory of governing all societies by the majority of voices of the constituent members, I must believe this principle the very best, in the abstract, that I know of.

HERMIT. Then Theophilus, I trust you will find me a friend in need, and I shall not delay to bring you the clue which will deliver you: indeed, it may be said that I have already done so, but you did not feel your need of it before, and have lost sight of it.

It is admitted by all men, that if God Almighty himself would condescend to rule us in all the varieties of our social relations, we should be well and rightly governed, and men would then obey, because they must. But this is not his will; he has however delegated his power to man, to govern us in all our social relations, if we will, in all temporal affairs, become his subjects, as the King of Kings, and in our spiritual relations, as the

Lord of Lords, and only bishop of our souls; but has forbidden him to assume the absolute dominion over any one unwilling subject, so that each individual shall still be a responsible creature, subject to reward and punishment, and not a creature of mere necessity; a slave to absolute decrees, or to be the subject of capricious election or condemnation, as regards salvation, either spiritual or temporal.

This man, even our Lord Jesus Christ, has said "Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of ages," and "whatsoever you shall ask in my name, I will do it." Moreover, he has given his faithful subjects powers fully commensurate with their necessities, and even their desires, saying, "These signs shall follow them that believe, they shall speak with new tongues. In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink poison, they shall not be hurt; they shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall be healed," &c. &c. This is God's own word, so that the voice of the Lord should be the infallible standard of a christian man's judgment, and the only rule, for our Lord will share his honor with no man.

RUSTICUS. Surely, my dear Hermit, we needed not to have been reminded of this again; indeed I thought you would have settled this question without a repetition of what we all have long ago agreed on.

HERMIT. My dear Rusticus, I will not rebuke your impatience, but will endeavor to satisfy it without taking up your time to justify myself, which indeed is the less necessary, as you declare you all agree with the principle I have advanced. Now then to apply it.

Let us first proceed to the election of a bishop, which I take for my first example, because the gospel in Acts ii. furnishes us the true rule, namely, by choice; election confirmed by our Lord by lot.

We may suppose, that in the community where a person is required to fill the office and do the duties of a bishop, there may be two persons proposed as candidates, who, in the belief of that community are perfectly qualified by piety and learning for the office. To carry out the explanation, let us suppose these were Theophilus and Academicus; then let three lots be chosen or prepared, three perfectly similar slips of paper for example, on one the name "Academicus" should be written, on another "Theophilus," and on the third, the name "the Lord;" these three lots being put in an opaque vase or

box, open at the top, and a congregation of the electors and others being met, the electors prepared by previous fast and prayer, as may be ordained; a solemn service may be performed, with reference to the subject, and appropriate prayers, always to conclude in the elective part by a prayer on the model of that by the apostles, thus: "O Lord Jesus Christ, thou who knowest the hearts of all men, choose now which of these twain thou wilt have to serve thee in the office of bishop of —, or whether thou, in thy eternal wisdom, seest fit to accept neither;" the lot should then be drawn publicly, by any person, called indiscriminately from the congregation by the leading minister. If the lot of Theophilus was drawn, no person could have room to say that he was not chosen by the Lord himself for the bishop, and appropriate thanks and prayer for the gifts of the Spirit to him, and exhortation should follow; but suppose the lot for the Lord had been drawn, then would neither of our friends be qualified to offer themselves again for that office; two other candidates must be chosen, and the process must be repeated. Since christians acknowledge no such thing as chance, the lot drawn must be considered by them, as the act of the Lord himself, and if some infidel should think proper to attribute the lot to chance, then are we no farther off than if we had proceeded to choice on such vague premises as any man's judgment of the qualification for the office of bishop. But in the choice of candidates we may be supposed to be in some uncertainty under such a system; but surely, if we be serious in referring to our Lord, it would matter little how the candidates be named or chosen, because we leave in his hands, to whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hid, the choice or the rejection of the party. Thus our sovereign claims the right to name a candidate for the bishop's office, to be subjected to a mock election by the clergy of his diocese; but they are not free to reject him, because of the severe penalty of premunire. Surely this is mockery all; yet it may be true that majesty may choose the best man. I would therefore leave vested rights, where they are in practice. A convocation of the clergy is acknowledged to have the right to elect the bishop; the sovereign claims the right to name the candidate: then let each name a candidate, the sovereign by privilege, the other by election, and subject them to the lot, as before said, whereby one may be elected, or both be rejected. In this manner, without de-

parting at all from the rule of human succession to the apostles, we should maintain a spiritual succession of the Lord's own appointment, in a way the scriptures dictate; nor in all cases would it be necessary to apply to the lot, because, if the congregation were good, pious, and faithful people, I believe the Lord would vouchsafe more intimate communion with them, and would give his Spirit to rule them by more direct communication, by open voice or vision, or a direct inspiration, and spiritual and miraculous power, because he has promised to do so; and as I have already mentioned, we have one example of it in the history of Elias Carpenter, and the living instruments through whom divine instruction was communicated to him from 1803 to 1807; and of Joanna Southcott, Richard Brothers, and others, as prophets of the Lord, about the same epoch; even as the Holy Ghost said to the church at Antioch, "Separate me Paul and Barnabas," &c. I have been very diffuse on this my first example, to show how the voice of the people, in majorities and minorities, may, however conflicting their opinions, be referred to an infallible standard, to which all faithful men would not hesitate to submit themselves; and if any such were found so disobedient, then I know no remedy but separation from the community.

**THEOPHILUS.** Your detailed example, Hermit, has made this point clear to me, and gives a clue to the right understanding of many of your previous observations, which then appeared heterodox, or at least mysterious. You have disposed of bishops well, but how would you carry out the same principle in the ordination of priests and deacons?

**ACADEMICUS.** Before our host goes further into his detailed modes of applying his principles, which I now see bears directly on the greater question of church government, which I had almost feared had slipped into oblivion, and that it had been lost in the subordinate questions of Rusticus, I would ask him how he disposes of the apostolic gifts, Mark xvi. 17, or the signs following faith or christian belief. Would you, Hermit, demand that the candidates for a bishopric, for the apostolical office, should be possessed of those miraculous powers?

**HERMIT.** If a christian had, previously to being chosen for a candidate for any office in the ministry of the Lord, such endowments, it would sufficiently demonstrate his qualification for any office, and our Lord's own approbation perhaps, without referring to lot. But in such

desultory conversations as these, I hope you will not expect from me that I shall furnish a rule for every imaginable case ; I may say, however, that these gifts ought to be claimed by the church, to follow all appointments approved by our Lord, for one simple reason, because he has promised them, as surely as he has promised his holy Spirit, and he is Almighty truth ; and on his side he will surely do as he has promised. I will now confess that my views extend even beyond the encampment of the church, even to the establishment of our Lord's reign as King of Kings, in temporals as well as spirituals ; but the path that leads to this object of our lucubrations is yet long and narrow, and has some obstructions to be removed to make our way easy. But let us reply to Theophilus.

If we recall what has already passed on the general subject of our Lord's ministry on earth, where we have concluded that we know no one case, in any church or sect (except, perhaps, the Moravians, of whose discipline I am ignorant,) where the ministers are unquestionably of our Lord's own selection, or who can show that they are by any open and manifest indication, even approved by him. Bear it in mind, because the speculative details, in answer to you all, my friends, are meant to have reference to the evils then bewailed, and to suggest simple and practical remedies for them. Having promised this to encourage your patient endurance of my prosiness, let us proceed to the election of a deacon. This office, I think, is generally misunderstood ; the seven appointed in Acts vi. are not therein so called, although they are so in the compendious heading to the chapter, which is no part of the text. They appear, as to their ostensible office, to have been a sort of church wardens or overseers of the temporal concerns of the church, but endowed with spiritual gifts, and by their use of them, show that it may be lawful for any such office-holders in the church to preach the gospel. But the general notion of a deacon in the regular churches, is that of a subordinate minister to the priest or elder, who has charge over several congregations, or to the bishop, to whom they were a sort of apprentices and servants, both in spiritual and secular affairs, as Elisha to Elijah. In our church, he is considered an assistant minister to him who has the cure of souls, in one congregation, or single ecclesiastical community. In some churches they are considered as a sort of missionaries, to

prove their qualifications to do the work of the Lord, by trial of their ability in small congregations or communities, to enable the church to know their fitness for full orders as priests or elders.

These preliminary observations on the nature of the deacon's office, are only necessary to show, that the mode of election or selection must depend on the nature of the duties expected from him.

1st. The election of a christian man to serve in the ministry of the word and work of the Lord, wherever he may be sent. First, his qualifications must be, continued union and communion with the body from which his authority emanates; this must be assured by his own vow, or promise, and must be responsible to the same. Second, he must be acquainted with the worldly history of Jesus Christ, as taught by the gospel record, and with the whole scripture record of the old and new Testaments, and with a sufficient knowledge of the doctrines of the body, of which he seeks to become a member and minister, &c. &c. &c., and must acknowledge to whom on earth, as also in heaven, he holds himself responsible for the due performance of his duties. Third, his name on one lot, our Lord's on another, that must decide whether our Lord rejects or accepts him. A rejection does not necessarily exclude him from a future reference to the lot as a simple deacon, nor in some cases even as a priest.

2d. Where the deacon is to serve the Lord in subservience to another minister, or priest, that priest should refer the candidate of his own choice to the Lord for approval by lot; and if he have more candidates than one, they should all be referred to lot.

3d. If the deacon is to serve a congregation, that congregation should elect one or more candidates, and refer them all to the lot,—and on every occasion of the lot, appropriate and solemn religious services to be used as they may be shown by direction or special ordinance.

Enough has been said to develope my principle, that there should not be a single office held in the church, generally or specially, where the holder has not been either appointed thereto by the Lord himself, or approved by the lot. And I may observe, that the use of the lot may be extended beyond the appointment of officers, as in the case of Joshua and Achan; and other legitimate modes of consulting the Lord may undoubtedly be used. But the grand principle that the Lord shall have the absolute nomination to every office in his own church, must

be maintained irrefragably. Thus my remedy to exclude mobocracy from the church is clear, and it provides a means of reconciling majorities of voices with minorities. In spiritual cases, and, indeed in all cases so happening, I would recommend to refer their opinions to the Lord for decision. Thus to elect the Lord himself for the bishop, the head bishop, the only bishop of our souls, is what I call true spiritual religion, and the very reverse of superstition. But I know the world in general, wedded as we are to Satanic rule, would call this, my religion, by the name of superstition, as the Roman governor did. They say they "will not have this man Jesus Christ to reign over us." We say nay. "We will serve the Lord." What they call superstition we call religion and the reverse. I have brought you to the end of what I meant to say in answer to Rusticus: — but before I resume the question of church government in its more minute features, I may as well develop the same principle, as applicable to temporal governments.

I set out with the principle that our Lord is King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and the only Bishop of our souls. When he permitted the Israelites to name or to elect a king subordinate to himself, he, the Lord, even God, who was afterwards manifested in Jesus Christ, selected the candidate: he chose Saul, David, and Jeroboam, and Jehu. I shall not dilate with remarks on their various characters, — the fact is all I want. *He* chose Aaron and his family, and the Levites also; and in every case of a candidate by the Lord's choice, he or they were confirmed to their office by election, thus proving this right to be given by the Lord to all free people, to have no minister or office-holder imposed on them against their will, or without their concurrence. So that in all times he has claimed the temporal and spiritual dominion of his own people, his own children; as all christians ought to be and are really his own children and subjects, if they will.

The only example I shall offer of applying the principle to the current practice of elections by the majority of voices, is a complex one, and taken from the practice of a county in a neighboring province; and I have done so to avoid any possible offence to the vox populi, to the people of the United States, who adopt the mobocratic principle — generally, when exercised soberly, decided by the majority of voices in organized assemblies; too often by capricious clamor in mobs, masses or disorgan-

ized bodies, irresponsible to any authority, unless it be to the author of all confusion in earth and in heaven, even Satan.

The neighboring county sends four members to its provincial assembly, who are elected at certain times. On the principle I would advocate, of bringing all men under the infallible rule of the almighty in our Lord, the only legitimate king of all men, I would ordain that the electors choose eight men by majorities of voices; these eight should have each his lot, and one lot for each one to be selected from the eight; that is, four from twelve lots in all. Then by a simple but well-ordered appeal to the Lord in a religious service ordained for the purpose, four lots should be drawn from the twelve; if those drawn be for any of the eight elected, those four are to be declared duly approved by divine majesty. If three of the lots drawn be for men, and one for the Lord only, then the electors must, as before, elect two other candidates, who must each have their lot, and one lot for the Lord; and the lot, as before, must decide whether either of these be approved or both rejected, when the Lord's lot is again drawn, and so on. If, on the first drawing, the two persons of the eight are chosen, and the remaining six rejected because two of the Lord's lots be drawn, then the constituted electors must elect four others, from whose lots, together with two for the Lord, two are to be drawn, and so on continually, until the number be complete; and if the four lots of the Lord be drawn in the first instance, then are all the eight candidates rejected by the Lord, and eight others must be elected to undergo a similar process for the selection of four.

I hope this will be enough to satisfy you of my principle.

RUSTICUS. Why, Mr. Hermit, this would cut up bribery, corruption and clamor by the roots. If such a system were honestly and piously carried out, such things could have no influence. And do you really think that any society of men, among whom there are any left with influence enough to flatter their ambitious hopes of dominion, with wit enough to declaim against such a system as a proof of weakness and superstition, such a clear and practicable mode would be adopted to avoid all the known evils of popular elections?

HERMIT. I have answered your question, Rusticus, without the slightest reserve. I mean your selection of this question as to the mode of bringing the decisions of



deliberative assemblies to an infallible standard, — and if we be christians, that standard must be acknowledged to be the truth. This new question, as to whether any society of men will adopt the principles, — this is begging a question the Lord alone can answer. But this much I am warranted by all scripture and the history of Israel in affirming, that if any society of men are piously and sincerely determined to be obedient to the voice of the Lord, so expressed, and carrying the principle out in all the details of their corporate association, the Lord himself will graciously condescend to take them under his own government and protection, and, moreover, would favor them, if indeed they continue in their obedience with reverence and humility, with more immediate communion with himself by his holy spirit, and by every other superhuman means exemplified in the scriptures. I would, moreover, carry out the same principle into all enactments of legislative and administrative bodies, and refer every question relating to or any way affecting the members of such an associated body, to the Lord himself, whether in church or state. Nay, further still, whether public or private, into every subordinate association, down to separate families, and even the individual members. We, my friends, have now been long enough acquainted for you to have discovered that I am an expectant; that is, I really do look for the promised coming of the Lord in the person of Jesus Christ in the glorious majesty of the Eternal Almighty, and he will establish his dominion and government visibly on the throne of David his father, and which shall endure for ever; and we expectants do consider the Lord's prayer to be a most compendious prophecy, or prediction of what shall be certainly, and the sooner as to time, the more sincerely and unanimously that prayer is offered up with the spirit and the understanding at the footstool of the throne of divine majesty, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ALL. Amen. Thy will be done in earth. Amen.

HERMIT. I rejoice, my friends, in this concurrent Amen. It came from the heart, and the Lord himself hears it. O that all the earth, or even all the church would concur in every petition in that all comprehensive prayer in its utmost latitude of sense and fullest meaning, and with one heart and voice offer it up, not only daily but hourly. Then indeed should we see that our Lord is not slack to answer prayer, and that he would

speedily arouse himself to avenge his elect. I cannot refrain, my friends, from offering an observation on that petition, in which we have so heartily and sincerely concurred; "thy will be done *in* earth." Some fastidious people, more nice than wise, adopt another form of it, and say, "thy will be done *on* earth," which may be as proper, for aught I know. Academicus, perhaps, can better inform us. The original I find, both in Matthew vi. and Luke xi., is "*epi tes Ges.*" But this I do know, that before our Lord's kingdom can be established *on* earth, it must so be *in* earth; that is, in the heart of individual man,—each of whom possesses no more earth than his individual body, which is not unfitly likened to a microcosm, or miniature of the whole earth and heavens. Before a kingdom can be set up, willing subjects must be prepared. Jesus Christ must be acknowledged in the heart and mind of every man, and be in each chosen as his king and Lord, before his kingdom can come *on* earth; and evil, the evil, the evil one, the devil, cannot be banished from the earth, nor we be delivered from this the adversary, until he be eradicated from every heart. Therefore, the incessant cry of the church should be, "Deliver us, O Lord, from the adversary, by eradicating every root and seed of evil from our hearts, we beseech thee. Amen."

ALL. Amen.

HERMIT. My friends, we have still an hour before us, and I think we are all now sufficiently prepared for my views on church government, in answer to Theophilus. There must certainly be some legitimate mode of associating for the purposes of cultivating religious knowledge, and devoting ourselves to the service of God and man on religious principles, that should be unobjectionable, and easily practicable. In the course of our conversations, Theophilus has called on me to propose some remedy for the too evident Satanic influence, not only in legally established churches, but in all sects of christians. That it is so, we need only open our eyes to see. Our Lord's principle is love, peace, and perfect unity with ourselves, each other, with Christ, and with the Almighty Father. Satan's principle is, hatred, wars, strife, envyings, pride of opinion, perpetual schisms and divisions, independence, individual right to freedom of opinion and action, and to set up the opinions of self as the only principle of judgment and of action, which must result in perpetual division and sub-division, to set

man against man for ever ; even as we see it now, and around us. Pray, my friends, whose influence is predominant in the church? (whether we embrace all the christian sects in the church, or consider any individual establishment or sect,) under whose influence are they? Christ's or Satan's?

ACADEMICUS. I was expecting our friend Theophilus to offer some reason to answer and to show why this charge should not lie, at least, against the Episcopalian Protestant church; but he looks quite astounded and horror stricken, and I do not wonder. I will, then, for myself, confess frankly, on the notoriety of the fact on Hermit's showing, that as Satan deceived our mother Eve at first, so has he at last betrayed the anti-type mother church into disobedience and foul rebellion. I am the more anxious to hear, Mr. Hermit, whether you really can imagine any possible remedy for an evil so tremendous and overwhelming; and perhaps we had better not interrupt you with any other observations just now!

HERMIT. I undertake the task with great diffidence, fearing my own powers to treat this subject of church government sufficiently clearly and succinctly even according to my own views; much less can I hope to embrace all the varied opinions of men on this important and all interesting subject. What I shall advance then, my friends, will be open to your observations and remarks, without any offence. In such matters I would avoid the least appearance of dogmatism or pertinacity. We cannot be driven to heaven, as some sects would, nor dragged there by the hair of the head, as the Mahometans. We must be led there as the great shepherd of our souls and bodies has graciously instructed us both by his example and precepts: for in heaven there are no pressed men, no unwilling subjects, — all must be willing and cheerful volunteers; all subjected by love, hope, and faith, as the law, to implicit obedience as its only fruits. Let us, then, proceed to the matter on hand on these principles. And first we must define who are the subjects of church government. We may suppose a case, where an individual man, by the grace of God, is turned in heart to the Lord. Either he is already a baptized christian, or he is not. If baptized, he knows, or should know, into what faith and church he was baptized, and he is bound to hold fast that, and not to make a schism in that body into which he was received by baptism, which, in fact, is figurative of a new birth, as a member

of that body. Such are not at present before us for discussion, but such only as have as yet entered into no social engagements to serve God in any peculiar mode or fashion. If he be sincere, he cannot be uninformed that we have a certain book amongst us, which does affect to be, and is believed to be the word of God Almighty, and so containing his will, as to human conduct, that in it we may find a rule to live by, so that we may adopt a rule of conduct in this life, which may secure to us the promises contained in it: he might possibly pray to receive such instruction more immediately, if possible, by more direct communication with the invisible world of spirits; but surely, in the hope of certainly knowing God's will, he will examine the written word, and he will find the first instruction to the Gentile man in Acts ii., both as to his creed and what he has to do to be saved, so as to assure his hopes of becoming an inheritor of all the promises, temporal and spiritual; that he must repent of all his sins; that is, of every contradiction manifested in his previous life to the will of God revealed to man; that he must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the pardon of those sins, and then that he shall receive the holy ghost, to teach him all things, and rightly to interpret the written word, so that he may have no excuse thereafter; for God himself, in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Truth, the Amen, the Almighty, has promised this, and if we be sincere in seeking him, will assuredly perform his promise. The first thing then, that such a man, being sincere, would do, would be to seek baptism; he would naturally desire to know what baptism is, and where it may be had; he finds the word as written, does not define what baptism is, and on inquiry, he finds that various and very different opinions exist amongst those who call themselves christians, upon this subject. Can such a man, understanding no language but English, decide who is right? For the written word declares there is but one baptism for the remission of sins. But one thing is clear, that it means a new birth by water. But as to the form by which the water is to be applied to him, or he to the water, the written word is silent. He will naturally suppose the people of that day must have known very well what was meant by the word baptism. Now if any one of the Apostles were alive at this day, would not such a man, being so converted, (as explained and assumed to be the case,) go to him for the very thing he wanted? that is, for true baptism? But there are none of the first Apos-

bles now alive. But he learns from the sacred record, that they formed themselves into a society called the church, in which certain persons were appointed to continue to baptize all nations, after instructing them; and he finds this society has lived ever since, in some form or other, in which certain pastors affirm that their authority has come down to them from the very apostles themselves, with power to transmit the same, through chosen men, in every generation, until the time of our Lord's return to the earth to abolish this dispensation, and establish another covenant with us, and our seed, being his own children. Would not such a man, desirous of being admitted into an association with such privileges, determine at once to seek what he wants in such a society, as has lived or existed from that time in unbroken succession? Oh no! In these days a poor simple man must be wary, for he finds the type of Solomon's thousand wives verified in this day in a thousand such societies, all called christian churches. The written word speaks of one of them only, — which is it? It is true, indeed, it speaks of branches of this church; but as members of its family in various different places, seven in Asia Minor, at Rome, Corinth, Macedonia, Antioch and Babylon, which come down unquestionably as to fact, however they may have erred in some recondite doctrines in the course of their history. These offices for the administration of certain definite ordinances, have come down in unbroken succession even from the apostles to our own day, in the American and English church, the Episcopal church, so called. Such a church will no doubt know how to baptize in the faith of Christ aright, and to a minister of an Episcopal church no doubt our man would go, if unprejudiced and reasonable.

Oh no! he is told that some people or sects, although they do not pretend to have succeeded by any legitimate or acknowledged rule of succession, yet they pretend to be better men, and to know the will of the Lord much better than these Episcopalians know about it; that these do not half baptize their converts. How is a poor man to decide between conflicting sects? I will give my opinion. Let him go to a minister of an Episcopal church for baptism into Christ's church, rather than to any questionable authority whatever, emanating from any association of later date than the apostles. The argument for this determination is short. The true object is to become a member of that church or society which was founded

by the apostles; in short, by our Lord himself. Any society of later birth or beginning, is not recommended in God's word.

And on this principle I would, in my own person, rather resort to a Roman priest, however much I deprecate the errors, corruptions, and the apostacy of the papacy, for baptism, than trust my salvation to the chance of failure, by giving it in the hands of any human authority, not legitimately derived and handed down by legitimate succession, unbroken by any human contrivance.

Thus I have shown my rule for entering into the fold of the christian flock; for the conduct of a christian when once so folded with Christ's sheep. I may now offer a few observations, and this much I have felt due, on apostolical succession, to set Theophilus more at ease on the subject, and to undeceive Rusticus and Academicus, if, indeed, any of you, my friends, may have fancied that I consider the maintenance of legitimate succession as useless, from the faults which I have ventured to find with those who pretend to this succession, for not maintaining the spiritual succession also. In the flesh, the society we call the church has lived to this our day in an unquestionable lineal descent. In spirit it has rarely, I believe, existed for ages. In the descent by the flesh, by fleshly ordinances, the line is unbroken; and this is man's part in the succession. The gifts of the spirit cannot be commanded by man, and therefore the failure of the spirit, if it could be proved, mars not the legitimacy of the succession in the flesh.

**THEOPHILUS.** You have indeed delighted me, good host. You have, indeed, completely and succinctly established my opinion of your orthodoxy, which before was decidedly against you. But, my friend, I shall now look for more instruction from you on this point. My surprise is, why I could not have said the same thing on apostolical succession myself. For certainly, your views as you have now explained them, I quite concur in, and think I never differed from. But your time is up, good Hermit. Good night.

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ELEVENTH CONVERSATION.

*Met as usual.*

**HERMIT.** I trust that your two days' hunting excursion will have sharpened your relish for these fireside en-

tainments. The two bucks and the caribou, its fruits, will furnish wear and tear for your teeth for some time ; but I will not interrupt the course of our discussion with matters of mere physical recreation. I had on Wednesday arrived at a point which particularly seemed to attract the admiration of Theophilus ; but I should desire much to hear your several opinions on baptism, as the initiatory sacramental rite or ceremony by which an adult man should be received into a christian church or community. I will frankly confess, that staggered by the various notions afloat in the world, to all of which there are many who call and believe themselves to be christians, and amongst these many seemingly very pious and most moral men do subject themselves, I cannot say that I give my opinions on this subject with the same confidence that I feel on some of the more abstruse doctrines.

I have asserted as my opinion that the apostolical succession, even as a fleshly ordinance, not only ought to be maintained, but is essential to our becoming truly Christ's subjects in this our tabernacles of flesh, and in support of it could, I think, speak volumes ; but our friend Theophilus seemed to awake as from a dream, and hastily caught hold of the clue I had put into his hands, by discriminating between the succession in the flesh and in the spirit, and thereon I hope he will now favor us with his views. I will only, before he commences, beg he will supply what I had not time enough to do at the close of our last discourse, viz. some observations on the confirmation which seems to have been considered an essential, if not the most essential part of the process of initiation. I am desirous to hear you all discuss this, whilst I will enact the moderator, and smoke my cigar tranquilly. By the by, Rusticus, how do you like these cigars ? I received them (as a kind token from a young officer who formerly served with me) but yesterday. They are all real Havanas, and these long ones are pure virgins, a new sort : try one.

RUSTICUS. I thank you, Hermit, I will do so gladly, which will prevent our interrupting our friend Akky and Thopy, to whom I shall be all attentive. Proceed then, friend Theophilus, with your eulogium on our host's orthodoxy, and consequent regain of his proper place in your esteem. That's where you left off on Wednesday night ; but perhaps you will first favor us with a few words on the duty of ministers of the gospel ?

**THEOPHILUS.** The duty of ministers of the gospel I conceive to be as living oracles, for spiritual instruction on scriptural authority, to members of Christ's body, and for spiritual guidance in all concerns, and for the constant and uninterrupted administration of the sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Where there are no ministers appointed or approved by our Lord specially, it may be questioned how far are members of the christian family authorized by the scriptures or by custom to administer the same? and when qualified to do so, by evident endowment? and also to fulfill other duties of the ministry?

Authority is in every church to ordain a ministry for that church in consistence with the laws of their association, but no church can have any authority to ordain ministers with exclusive spiritual authority, unless approved by the head, even our Lord Jesus Christ; and every association has a right to declare what is sufficient testimony of our Lord's approbation, and if that testimony be given. Ministers so ordained should be received and be obeyed, within the limits of their jurisdiction, by every member of that association.

**ACADEMICUS.** When baptized in the name of the Lord, are we by that, baptized into the general church of Christ's mystical body, or into any particular church or sect? and do we owe subordinate spiritual allegiance to the ministers of any particular sect or church?

**THEOPHILUS.** We are baptized into the universal church, and thenceforth owe all spiritual allegiance to its head, even to Jesus Christ our Lord; and we owe the same, in due subordination to him, to all his ministers, known to be duly and truly endowed with his authority, and we should have reasonable testimony of our Lord's approval of their office.

**ACADEMICUS.** Is the pope duly authorized to hold spiritual dominion of the visible church on earth?

**THEOPHILUS.** It does not appear that our Lord has given any authority to any human being to bear any such universal rule, even on earth, much less in heaven. Peter himself never used any such, or pretended it, and for any man to claim such jurisdiction without express and well-attested authority from our Lord to him, (the pope,) is usurpation of an authority which our Lord appears to have kept in his own hands only. The situation is known by historical testimony to have been held by wicked men, by our Lord's providential permission certainly, and by



a human system of mortal succession, but has never had the unquestionable authority of our Lord. Therefore he is antichrist, even if he be not the antichrist, an idol, and whoever acknowledges divine authority to be in that person or office as now constituted, in so far as he does so, he is an idolater and a rebel against the Lord: and thus do all the ministry of the papal church, and therefore have no title to be received as the ministers of Christ.

ACADEMICUS. Are the bishops and ministers of the church of England to be accredited as duly authorized ministers of God's word, and are they exclusively authorized to administer the sacraments and to instruct the people?

THEOPHILUS. Our bishops appear to be as objectionably installed into their office as the pope; our Lord's consent and approbation being without any visible sign of it, and not even being inquired for; and the ordination of priests and deacons is subject to a similar objection. Therefore, as spiritual freedom is the natural endowment of every man, and faith cannot be made subject to human laws, the ministers of our English church have no exclusive spiritual jurisdiction, except where they are duly acknowledged to have authority, which can only so far be considered divine as the testimony commands our faith — which testimony should be unquestionable. It is not so now.

ACADEMICUS. Has the ministry of any known sect divine authority for its ministers?

THEOPHILUS. I know of none. The Dissenters, Methodists and others, have even a more objectionable title to be esteemed as Christ's ministers, than those of our church; except only, as I understand, the Moravians, who are said to be chosen by lot, by which the Lord's will is sought in all questions requiring it, by that people. If indeed this be so, they only of all christians can be said to be under Christ's own government.

ACADEMICUS. Are then christians in common entitled to administer or dispense the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper in humble duty to our Lord?

THEOPHILUS. I believe they are not; and with respect to the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper — the former give all the privileges of christians, the latter appears to be sign of fellowship commemorative of the great sacrifice of our Lord, and therefore as a common duty and pledge of faith, should be the universal

practice of christians, whenever bread and wine are used in their repasts, either special, for the very purpose of the institution, or general, on the occasion of customary general repast. It was by the breaking of bread thus by blessing, that our Lord was recognized; and in their repasts so should all christians be known to each other, by this sign.

ACADEMICUS. Do you mean that the sacrament of the Lord's supper should be open for the administration of all christian men, and should be considered as merely a commemorative ordinance and sign (perhaps secret to the non-initiated) of christian fellowship, such perhaps as exists in freemasonry?

THEOPHILUS. I mean all this, but with some necessary limitations. First, the common repasts ought never to be converted into this sacrament, and it can never be commemorated in company of which the profane make a part. In families truly christian, the day should be closed by this sacrament and prayers, and besides which a public administration in church at least weekly, and on holydays, and where there is no priest by a senior member chosen by the congregation of communicants from among themselves, and approved by the churches with whom we hold communion.

ACADEMICUS. Does then the apostolic succession, boasted of by the Roman and English churches, mean nothing?

THEOPHILUS. It is merely, as it is now practiced, a human mode of inheritance, adopted for the transmission of spiritual authority, and this is valuable more particularly as giving stability to the testimony continued through succeeding generations, not only to the ordinances, but to the traditions of the church; for it should be borne in mind, the churches were formed on oral testimony, as a means to continue the sure evidence of the events of gospel history, then but orally current, yet capable of proof, by living testimony through all succeeding generations, until our Lord should come again. The gospels and epistles were not even written until the churches even of the Gentiles had been formed, and were not collected into one volume, until the days of Constantine, in the fourth century; so that the New Testament does not affect to give rules for forming churches, but is addressed to churches already formed, in which the gospel history was received by the witnesses, living testimo-

ny, and continued in the same church downwards through time by their ordinances founded thereon.

As this testimony stands now undenied and undeniable, all the facts commemorated and recorded in both testaments are now become public property, and the mere formal, monumental ordinances for the transmission of the evidence of facts of those days to these our own and still later times, become less necessary perhaps for punctilious precision of observance; but there are some which it does not appear the church can ever part with until our Lord's return—the commemoration of our Saviour's birth of a virgin, of his circumcision, his baptism, crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension, and all else, the Lord's day, the conversion of Cornelius, the first fruits of the Gentiles, the conversion of Paul our apostle, and the days of the martyrdom of the apostles and evangelists. But above all, the sacrament of the Lord's supper should be kept daily from house to house, and in mutual fellowship. In short, the church of England seems perfect, if our Lord had not been dethroned and his authority usurped by satanic influence, by which the hierarchy of the church now lords it over Christ's heritage, instead of ministering to it, and now monopolizes the sacraments, and assumes the true character of spiritual despotism.

You may perceive, my friends, I have descended far below the presumed rights or powers of an episcopal ministry with which I had been imbued. This confession has resulted from our conversations. In truth, I think our church must descend far below its present unhallowed pretensions, before men can yield themselves without reserve, to their authority.

RUSTICUS. Be so good then, dear Theophilus, as to tell us your present views of the apostolic succession.

THEOPHILUS. It appears to me most strange that the part of the constitution of our episcopal church which seems to my mind the most simple and clearly understood, should be so difficult to be explained and demonstrated satisfactorily even to myself. I attribute my failure hitherto to my own overweening confidence, that all reasonable men could not fail to see the reason of the thing (I mean the necessity of preserving the apostolical succession pure and unquestionable) as clearly as myself, and in part my failure has been owing to my own awkwardness; for although in our previous discussions, Academicus seemed even to myself to manage his argu-

ments better than I did, yet they have failed to convince me that I was wrong, and I return to the subject with so much the more assurance, as our host seems now on my side. And I owe him my apology for having so much mistaken him. But I must entreat you, my friends, not to fancy that the subject is not capable of perfect defence, even if I by over-confidence or awkwardness should again fail in my defence of this essential bulwark of the church of Christ. And if I should happen to leave any of the breaches unrepaired or undefended, I look with confidence to the Hermit to supply my deficiencies.

In some part of our former discourses, Hermit made out a few striking analogies. They were these. God, the universal father, the eternal spirit, is to Christ in the flesh as Jesus Christ is to his church, or to men incorporated in the body of the church, or to man as a member of the same, and as the soul of individual man is to the body, and as the man to his wife. The analogy may be pursued even through all the filial relations. Thus Christ is the son of God, and the church, or the woman; the church itself is the daughter of Christ, his offspring, and his wife taken from his side on the cross; and man himself is the son of the woman naturally, and of the church spiritually, &c.

Now Christ was promised to be the seed of the woman, the seed of Adam, of Seth, of Noah, of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and of David. If the line by the flesh had been broken in any way, under any circumstances; that is, if he had not been all these, he would not have been the Christ promised in the Bible, and the descent by the natural line, by the flesh, was not made at all to depend on the spiritual endowments of those through whom the seed was transmitted; for many of David's successors, and probably of his ancestors, were probably as rank apostates as any bishops; yet this was not suffered to cancel the promise, nor mar the inheritance of himself or any of his progenitors in the land of Canaan, whatever it might have done as regards its antitype, the kingdom of heaven.

So, my friends, the church of Christ is not a mere spiritual body, (and herein I think lies the common mistake,) but it is the fleshly body of Christ, owned by him in this relation. She is his bride in the flesh, and in the flesh, frail though it be, she must be and remain until her Lord come again in the flesh, and subject to sin and defilement. When that epoch shall arrive, his everlasting marriage will take place: he will then impart to her his

own perfect nature, his own glory and purity in both spirit and flesh, which will then be subject to neither sin nor defilement. The earthly origin of the church was as humble and lowly as that of her Lord; it so pleased him. Her birth was from himself; the law of her life, or continuance in existence was founded on himself, the chief corner-stone, the rock on which, as a building, she was to be erected. The foundation stones of that building were the apostles, and the law for carrying on this building was contained in the command, "Go ye unto all nations, disciplining or teaching them to obey me in the precepts, which I have delivered to you, baptizing them in the name of," &c. This name, my friends, we all understand was the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord, the eternal Jesus, father, son and holy ghost. All which are the characters or names assumed by the only one God almighty, manifested in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Now to whom was this command given? I say to the eleven exclusively, not to the others of the five hundred then present. The eleven were then the only members of the church then incorporated into one body by this command as an ordinance in the flesh, afterwards to be cemented together as living stones by the unction of the spirit, his spirit, even the holy ghost. This command involved all the duties of the ministry and government of the church, its organization as a body corporate, and its entire structure. The whole church, all its powers as a body corporate, were then contained in those eleven members, who, under the direction of the holy ghost, were endowed with all the gifts necessary for the government of the whole body, even when it should be developed in all its magnitude and glory, still subject to the Lord and to him only. The apostles, individually, had no separate jurisdiction, powers or authority. They could do nothing as a body, but in the whole body, and of this body Peter was the first head in subordination to the Lord.

What was their first act (see Acts i) when the numbers associated were one hundred and twenty, but evidently none were in the ministry or government of the body, save only the eleven, now incomplete by the defection of the traitor? Now although the hundred and twenty were associated by their experience and feeling, they were not incorporated with them by any formal act, as it would appear, and certainly were not all qualified for the apostolic office or ministry. The command, "Go ye,"

&c. was not given to all, but to the eleven only; nor does it appear certain that any more than, or any others than the two named of the whole number assembled, were qualified for the vacant office by their experience and knowledge, supposing them both equally qualified in the minds of the apostles; and it does not appear by the record that the rest of the assembly appointed the two; it does not appear that they (the whole assembly) elected these two, but that they (the apostles) appointed two; for it would be contrary to all reason that the apostles would think of submitting the choice of an associate for themselves, in duties not to be restricted, to that assembly, but who was to go forth with them into all the world. I say it would be absurd to suppose such a thing; yet on this supposition, absurd as it seems, all sectarian self-ordination to missionary or apostolic labors are founded. I really cannot, for the life of me, see in the scriptures, much less in the traditional history of the church, on what plea, or tests, or practice, the presumptuous usurpation of the apostolic or the ministerial offices can be justified. If indeed, our Lord himself, by any supernatural, or miraculous or spiritual agency, which shall be manifestly his own work, shall think fit to call any man to this, as of old he was used to do to the prophetic office, who can question his authority — his natural right to do so? But then the act must be openly shown and known to be his, for the assurance of those to whom he is sent; for behold! see the gracious condescension of our Lord in order not to lay too great a burden on the weak faith of his children, and to secure them against unauthorized pastors, teachers or preachers, wolves in sheep's clothing, &c., &c. Even those whom he calls and sends by his spirit, he subjects to the proper natural authority, vested in his church to stamp them with the natural seal of that corporate body, one most prominent example of which is our blessed apostle Paul. Although he was called by a stupendous miracle, yet did he not receive the command to go forth, &c., until his call had been fully verified in the face of the church; and his mission to the Gentiles was by command of the holy ghost, verified and fully testified to, by the laying on of the hands of the church by its ministers at Antioch.

And thus it was with the prophets of old. We believe they were anointed to their office, by publicly acknowledged competent authority, and so far as the record goes, we see no instance of their appointment's ever hav-

ing been questioned, but on the contrary the words they were commanded by the holy ghost for our instruction and comfort to write, were received in faith as God's own words; yet were they always verified by some manifest signs that they were from God himself, although but little and ill-understood by all, even to this our own day. I could digress much, but the nature of our present inquiry, Where is the church? Who are the church? In this inquiry, wherein we have it at present shut up in the persons of the twelve apostles, it will now be necessary to pursue their church history in the acts recorded.

We read then of the conversion and baptism of thousands, of there being tens of thousands even in the church at Jerusalem, but no ministry or government among them, which was not vested in and exercised exclusively by the apostolical body, and all subject only to the direction of our Lord, only by his spirit. I shall here just glance at a mistake that seems to be of old standing in the church. It is supposed by the Romans, that Peter was the first bishop of Rome, and they found their absurd claim to infallibility, and to universal spiritual despotism, on this plea. But surely he who runs may read, that Rome was most specially committed to Paul. Acts xxiv. 2. Rom. i. 2, &c. Besides which, we do not find that any of the twelve, or Paul the apostle to the Gentiles by special appointment, were ever the local bishops, or overseers of any single church or district. They established churches every where, overlooked and regulated them all. They appointed their officers, and especially three distinct orders of them, now denominated by us, bishops, priests and deacons. They communicated to them spiritual gifts, seven sorts of which are enumerated in several places. The orders of the ministry called Christ's gifts, are four; Ephes. iv. 2; and of individual endowments, nine are specially noted in 1 Cor. xii. All these gifts of office or the spirit were the special gift of Christ through the apostles only by the laying on of their hands, and ratified by the laying on of the hands of those who had been so apostolically appointed to certain offices, as the elders, so that without these gifts of office, and of the spirit, no church could be called a church, because not established. This distinction is seen in all Paul's epistles.

When any church or churches were so established, they had the powers of propagating and transmitting the same endowments, to beget and establish other churches

in like manner. But to every individual man the spirit divided his gifts as he willed, and so likewise to every individual church: and the whole family of Christ, distinguished by churches, is called one catholic or universal church, in which family all the familiar relations may be distinguishable, as of the mother church in Jerusalem, of whom all others are daughters, all established by the same spirit and by the instrumentality of any particular missionary apostle, may be called sisters, and each church had the power to propagate and extend itself by natural generation, or means, even as the human race. Each church then stood in the same analagous relations to other churches, as parents, brethren, or children, as individual christians or men do naturally with each other.

Thus, my friends, I have given a cursory and very compendious, and brief outline of the generations of the church, as to the nature of its propagation and government in primitive times; this I conceive to be the apostolical church of Jesus Christ, and is what is called the orthodox view.

In the relations which I have described, they lose no right to be included in any other social privileges, accorded in society to any other men, or bodies of men, with any other bodies or individuals associated on other and worldly relations. Thus any, or all the churches or office-holders therein, and every individual, have the same right to hold property, inheritances, and the goods of this world, as any others associated on any other principles, but their principles forbid their exercise of any temporal authority whatever. The church members ought not to be subjected to any pains and penalties but excommunication or excision, and to no restraints but love and charity; all must be volunteers, nor flinch from their allegiance to their gracious Lord and Saviour, even unto death.

So that no church can be apostolically settled which is not derived visibly and sensibly, from some church of apostolical origin. An unbroken succession in fleshly ordinances, commencing with the facts intended to be commemorated thereby, is the strongest and best testimony which can be given in the flesh, of the facts so commemorated. Thus the unbroken ministerial or episcopal succession is too valuable as testimony, to justify its being dispensed with by us, as men and christians.

Now, as in this country there are many such, as notoriously have not such an origin, and men fancy them-



selves authorized to form church communities when, where, and how they please; to appoint their own office-holders, and to be subject to no other spiritual control or jurisdiction than such as they are pleased to impose on themselves, and such as willingly submit to them, I am not disposed to question their right to do as they please, for our Lord left even the wicked Jews to do as they pleased, even to the murder of him, their Lord and King; but this I will venture to assert, even in America, that their churches are not founded on the apostles, nor by any authority derived from them, on the Rock, the chief corner-stone, Jesus Christ, neither can the apostolically derived churches have any fellowship or communion with them, for they are of men, not of God; they may have gone out from us, but are not of us.

Now the man who would be baptized into the church of Christ, as it was built and constituted by the apostles, must not, or ought not to hazard his salvation in so vital a point, as to trust his own judgment, nor any other man's, but boldly enter within the veil of Christ's apostolic church, in the way which he has appointed: therefore you will not wonder at the satisfaction I testified at Hermit's opinion on the subject, so consonant with my own.

I am called on however, by our host, to say a word or two on the completion of that initiatory sacrament by confirmation, of which the Romans have made another ceremony and another sacrament, and the sectarians dispense with it altogether.

We must, I fear, return to the history of the apostolical acts for a rule both of the external ceremonies and spiritual faith, as to what is acceptable to the Lord. No notice is taken of any subdivision of the labors of the ministry until Acts vi., when seven men were chosen by the brethren, not by the apostles, with certain qualifications, of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom, qualifications which could only be known by sensible manifestation, and whether full of the Holy Ghost, could only be known by corresponding super-human works; qualifications which could not be mistaken. The form and manner of selecting or electing these candidates is not recorded, therefore it is presumable that it is of little importance. The conclusion however, is noted briefly, and sufficiently fully, "and when they had prayed they laid hands on them." Now, it appears by the book, that they did not, as in the case of Matthias, com-

municate the full powers of an apostle to them, that their ministry was local and limited in power; that even these men, called deacons, were only authorized to perform the outward and visible ordinance of baptism with water. An authority limited as this was, even this does not appear to have been confided to any others of the many myriads of brethren at that time, and the inference is clear, that none could ever baptize without apostolic authority, specifically given; so clear indeed, that I should fear to rest my claim to the glorious gospel promises to the church, to this apostolic church, by accepting baptism from any hands not apostolically authorized. This authority was not always given so ceremoniously; for at the baptism of Cornelius and his house, the first fruits of the Gentiles, Peter says, "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?" "and he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

Now, in these few words, there is contained a complete refutation of some common errors in some who have departed from us. First, of the Quakers, who deny the necessity of outward ordinances, and yet are fastidiously scrupulous in measuring men's piety by their moral works. Second, of the Baptists, who insist, that without immersion of the entire body in water, there is no baptism, and contend that its entire efficacy depends on the formal process of its operation, and yet quarrel with, and quit us, because we have reduced the stated services of public worship, and the public administration of the ordinances to order and form. Thirdly, the fastidious and formal trinitarian, may here learn that the name of "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," is one name, of one person, even of the Lord; and by Acts ii. he will see they were commanded to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. By this, I say, as our friend Hermit has before shown, that the holy trinity, as expressed by the words or name, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is manifested, and belongs to one only person, even Jesus Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth, and that there are not in any sense, three persons in our God, for the Lord our God, is one Lord, the eternal. Fourthly, the presumptuous men, who assume the authority to baptize in the triune name, without apostolic authority. This did not Cornelius and his associates, even after they were filled with the Holy Ghost. They were not baptized until Peter commanded it to be done, nor could any man presume so to baptize unless so commanded.

I am now come to speak of the second part of baptism, in which I confess, with shame and grief, that our church is cruelly negligent. It is seen, that when the power to baptize with water was given, that to baptize with the Holy Spirit was not; namely, to the chosen seven. This the apostles kept in their own hands. It is stated by Paul to be the doctrine of the laying on of hands, which was for the gifts of the Holy Ghost generally, and on the nomination to offices for special or local purposes, for the peculiar gifts necessary to qualify them for the special services for which they were appointed.

It may please the Lord certainly to give the Holy Ghost to whom he will; but the baptism by water, even by the ordinances of our church, can give no man ground to believe that the seal of the Holy Ghost has been applied to him; for confirmation by apostolic order, is the only ordinary means of obtaining the gift of the Holy Ghost; and no man can enter the kingdom of God, or see it, unless he be born again of water and of the Spirit, which all reasonable men must see, are claimed by the ordinances of baptism and confirmation; and there can be no valid baptism or confirmation but by ministers duly ordained with such power by succession to the apostles, which, in our church, is performed by priests or deacons, with water, but confirmed by the gifts of the Spirit by bishops only, and generally about the age of thirteen or twelve, when the Jews always made their public profession of faith, or as our Lord, at the age of twelve. Now all sectarians despise this completion of the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Now as this lays at the very threshold of the christian profession, it is really too serious a thing to be neglected. Thus the Ephesians, although baptized and brought into church order, were only confirmed by Paul.

All sectarians despise this ordinance, and too many of the church neglect it as a thing of no importance. The application of the water, may vary in form and manner, according to circumstances; but whether the baptized be accepted or not, can only be known by the gifts of the Spirit, and this cannot be expected ordinarily, by any other ordinance than by confirmation. When the adult example (supposed by Hermit,) of a man seeking salvation in the pale of the church, may have been baptized with water, by a regular minister of an apostolic and episcopal church, his next step is to be confirmed by a bishop.

I have now brought my observations on the apostolical succession to a close, and our discussion up to the point where Hermit left it; and I trust Academicus will now fully understand the length and breadth of my meaning by it.

ACADEMICUS. My friend Theophilus, I really am obliged to you for your very lucid exposition, not only of the apostolic succession, but for your outline of a perfect spiritual government of the christian church, and your numerous very excellent remarks. You have given us a view of the primitive system of christianity, as to its polity—its spiritual polity I mean—which is so perfect that we had little difficulty in tracing to its very perfection and simplicity, all the mischiefs of the spiritual despotism which has grown out of it, after its ministry became corrupt and fell into the snares of Satan, the world, and the flesh. All the evils of our present divisions and sects, appear to have grown out of this apostacy; and my apparent opposition to your views has not arisen from any doubt of the system of apostolical succession having originally been as perfect as for fallible and mortal men it could have been made, for I believe the system to have been our Lord's own work. But there is a heartlessness, negligence, pride, and apathy, as to the spiritual endowments or gifts, and as regards familiar and individual religion in the mass of the episcopalian ministry even of this day, that warrants my skepticism in concluding that, seeing Satan has succeeded in obtaining the patronage of the episcopal churches generally, some justification may be offered for those who are so convinced, for hesitating; nay, for absolutely refusing to deliver their souls into the keeping of men who are manifestly and notoriously of Satan's choosing, and whose administration in the service of the Lord must be poisoned by the very principles, so notoriously worldly (and therefore Satanic,) by which they have generally been elected into their offices in Christ's episcopal church—for the most part too, they are manifestly condemned by their works, which are the natural fruits of unrighteousness; their general character too, is, that in every thing, even those who walk in the straight paths of this world's morality, in their whole demeanor and teaching they appear as lords of Christ's heritage, rather than the ministers, shepherds or servants of Christ's flock: their consequential pride, arising from their genteel provision, and their habits of social intercourse with genteel so-

ciety, only render it impossible generally, that the mass, the poor, all the classes lower in the scale of human appraisal than that in which their own persons and family are used to move, in their worldly relations, are shut out from familiar communion with them, and are therefore deprived of the comforts, instruction, and religious benefits they ought to expect from their ministry. They dare not associate or be seen with publicans and sinners; they dare not visit a low vulgar public house, or a brothel, fearing to follow the example of him they call their God and Lord, lest they fall under the censure of the genteel part of the community, the world, their real master. Admitting that their succession in the flesh is perfectly legitimate from the apostles, yet the apostolic office was not of the flesh, but the Spirit. Christ's church is purely spiritual in all its ordinances, which indeed must be kept in the flesh and in the letter; but the spirit is the very life and soul thereof; for he is not a Jew who is only so outwardly by circumcision, nor a christian who is only so by water-baptism. I could multiply texts without number, but you, my friend, know them all better than I do. I will confess, however, that we are in a fearful dilemma between the letter in flesh which killeth, and the spirit in the word, which alone is life. Yet so intimately united here, are the spirit and life with the flesh, that we know not of ourselves how to separate them, or practically to discriminate. Is not this the case put by our Lord, of an offending right eye; the eye is a symbol or emblem of spiritual power in all scripture; but he says, "if thine eye offend thee pluck it out and cast it from thee," &c. This was Luther's case. In his reformation he was forced to abandon the apostolic succession in the flesh, because it had lost the spirit, and he cast it from him. Calvin was obliged to do the same; whilst our fathers, Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, and others, were able to effect our reform without such a sacrifice; but in doing this, they were forced to yield the church, and that very succession to the apostles by fleshly ordinances, into the hands of its spiritual enemy, the world; and its patron and friend, Satan, is too intimate with that world, its powers and dominions, not to use his deadly influence for the exclusion of God's Holy Spirit, and counter-working it by every hellish art, his malice can contrive. And alas! he has succeeded but too well.

I think, my apostolic friend, even you are not prepar-

ed utterly to condemn all those good and great men, and that even you would not hazard your salvation to preserve that in the flesh, which without the spirit means nothing, and is nothing worth. Let me ask you, for our host has hazarded an assertion that rather astonished me, if the apostolic succession existed unbroken in no church except the papal church of Rome, with its Trentine creed, and open creature worship, and so far as we can see, without any one holy spiritual gift, would you hazard your salvation in that church rather than be baptized in any other church, seemingly governed by correct principles, without this fleshly apostolical succession?

THEOPHILUS. You have put a hard question, and I think I hardly know myself well enough to answer how I should decide; but think I should pray sincerely to our Lord for the guidance of his Spirit, long and patiently halting between two opinions. But I thank my Lord God most sincerely, that, from the wreck of christianity by corruption, he has saved one branch of his church pure in profession, wherein a man, be he ever so spiritually minded, may, I know, obtain the salvation promised by the gospel, without hazard from rank idolatry, wherein, if the ministers be not so pure and perfect as they ought to be, nor do so much good as ought to be expected from them, yet they do not impose on their flocks the necessity of most idolatrous practices totally subversive of true spiritual christianity, and the truths of the gospel, to the utter destruction of any soul who willingly partakes therein. You must admit also, that in our church ministry of the English church there have been as many examples of piety, learning, and christian humility as in any age or country, and as much devoted to the service of the Lord. And Academicus, I will now ask you one question. Where is the man of any sect, (even my friend, himself,) who would be bold enough to enact that part of Satan's character in Job, as the accuser of his brethren? Who, I say, is so confident in his own christian perfection, as to personate the accuser of the ministry of the Episcopal church of England, as a body, before the throne of our Lord? Of good men, we can imagine none other than the spirit of our blessed apostle Paul himself, who indeed, has great cause to complain of us; but of the sects, churches, and denominations of christianity, our church can recognize none so perfect as to qualify them for the office of complainants, for she does not feel herself at liberty to per-

secute or to injure any one. She does indeed, in her corporate capacity, pity and pray for all, and she refuses neither instruction nor communion from and with any one who seeks it in the spirit of christian love and charity. And is there one christian sect (except, perhaps the Moravian, which never rails,) to whom the church might not, without much pains-taking, return railing for railing, and accusation for accusation? And let us hope that even you, my friend, as well as all those who are the friends of our Lord, and of his kingdom, and all who may be our enemies, rather to pray for and aid us to reform our errors and abuses, than try to overwhelm us with shame and confusion, as if there were none so great sinners as the episcopal clergy. In our Lord's own words, I say, "Let him that is guiltless cast the first stone." Let us remember, above all, that our ministry has no secret conclaves, it is open to the view of the whole world, in all its acts, which can hardly be said of any other, and subjects the people, the church, to no capricious despotism, nor to a tyranny of any sort. It is confessed that we are not perfect. It is acknowledged we ought to aim, by all means, to become so; we pray for the Spirit's grace for this purpose, and we sail quietly and steadily, and soberly, among the quicksands of infidelity, impiety, and of extravagant enthusiasm, and of idolatry, and barbarism. Our yoke is easy, our burden is light; we avoid with equal care the extremes of infidelity, licentiousness, and superstition, and impose no will-worship on the flocks, for a standard of godliness by the will of enthusiasts. To sum all in a word, the character of our church is sobriety in faith and practice, eschewing extravagance and enthusiasm, but zealous of good works; before men we stand blameless; before God, we presume not to have any righteousness of our own. We know ourselves to be but dust and ashes, but clothed in the robes of our Saviour's righteousness, we venture to present ourselves continually before his throne of love, in the name of our Lord, and faith in the efficacy of his atoning blood. Humbly, but with a steady faith, we pray ever for daily and continual supplies of his spirit and his grace to guide us to all truth: amen.

HERMIT. Amen.

RUSTICUS and ACADEMICUS. Amen.

ACADEMICUS. My dear Theophilus, it is worth while to goad your episcopacy, for really I never before have heard you so eloquent. Having changed your weapon

from the shield to the sword, you have used this weapon most manfully, and almost thou persuadest me to be a churchman. I really am both delighted and instructed. Although I have heard or read the same things, I have never heard them so impressively stated, and I promise you, that I will join you with my hearty prayers always that the church may ever find grace with the Lord to see and amend her own faults. Serious faults, and grievous, I know she has, and so do you too, my friend Theophilus, which in argument you could not refute; but the charge of assuming the character of the accuser, whilst but remonstrating in the feeling and language of friendly observation and concern, I must feel sharply, however I may have merited it, and it will make me pause before I again venture to expose the failings of the episcopal church of England, lest I draw on myself the reiteration of such an unkind and inconsiderate assimilation to Satan. I must however remind you, my friend, how much you wronged me, in the language of scripture, "If Satan be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?" I was bewailing Satan's influence in the church, and advocating his expulsion. Is this the language of the accuser of the brethren?

**THEOPHILUS.** Pardon me, my dear Academicus, if in the warmth of our debate, my observation (which was far otherwise intended,) seemed to apply to you personally; for, as regarding my own observations on sectarians, it might with as much or more justice apply to myself. With respect to the sects also, I might have found a more appropriate similitude in the self-righteous Pharisee, who was not only his own eulogist, but could see no good at all in his neighbor. The excuses of sectarians for separation, is, I think, too commonly of this character, setting forth their own righteousness, and the delinquencies of our ungodly church.

**ACADEMICUS.** Our friend Theophilus' overwhelming defence of, and eulogium on the episcopal church, quite drove out of my head the few observations which the Hermit requested from each of us. I do not think I can at all improve on the general view of that sacrament taken by Theophilus, namely, that baptism by water, is necessary as the outward and formal ceremony, altogether fleshly, into that society of men who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the same who is made known to us in the four gospels, the truth of which is testified unto by our Lord, under his own signature, Amen, as his fleshly seal, and also by his Holy Spirit in various ways,



all through the New Testament ; and also verified by the predictions written by direction of the same Holy Spirit all through the Old Testament, that Jesus of Nazareth, was begotten of the Spirit of the eternal and universal God Almighty ; that he died on the cross, executed as an evil-doer or malefactor, not for his own sins, for he was spotless, but for ours, for the sins of the whole world, that is, for the whole race of Adam and Eve ; that his death was no simulous or sham death, but real as the death of any other man, proved by the blood and water which flowed from his body when pierced, proving that the spear must have pierced his heart, where alone, in the human body, blood and water, in distinct form, are generated ; that this man, begotten of the Spirit of the one Almighty Spirit, was by nature one with God, in whom only God ever was or ever will be manifested, or show himself to mankind ; that this Jesus, once dead, rose again from the dead, both in body and soul, by the power of the Holy Spirit which was in him, on the third day, and continued to show himself during forty days, on the earth to hundreds of witnesses, to whom he gave full evidence of his being the very same man they had known before his public execution, and gave them power and the command to bear witness of these facts, and of his whole history on earth, to all future generations, as is done by the New Testament, and by all the ordinances of this religion, of which baptism by water, is the very first in order ; that he ascended visibly to Heaven, and was received into universal space, where he rules over all God's creation with almighty power, a power derived from almighty power, called the Father, or Universal, Eternal, Almighty, in a manner beyond the nature of men to comprehend ; but this power almighty of Jesus Christ is not a delegated power, but his own by right and nature. In short He is, He was, He ever will be the only one God Almighty, Eternal, Ever-living, and Universal Jehovah, Elohim, Amen. To him, and to God in him, all our worship, praise, and prayers, are to be addressed, and to him all glory given as to him only due, in heaven and in earth.

This creed results to me from our familiar conversations, but is, or appears to me, strictly scriptural ; and I have been more precise in stating it, because if such precision were used in professing our faith at our baptism, I must believe that this grand doctrine would not be liable to suffer and to create sectarian, (nay Satanic) dif-

ferences, feuds, and disorders, in the christian family, as it has done. I mention this, because, in my own person, although baptized in my infancy, and reared, and instructed in all the usual forms of episcopal christianity, I confess I never was fully acquainted with the true doctrine contained in the single fact that God over all blessed for ever, was in Jesus Christ, reconciling the world to himself, until with our good Hermit for our pilot, we had turned over the pages of the book of Revelations, and he made me understand why a peculiar blessing was pronounced on him who reads or hears the words of that blessed book, at its very opening on him who keeps its sayings in the end of the same ; and I beg, Hermit, you will now accept my acknowledgment, that I believe, by God's favor and grace, and your aid, and that blessed book which you have taught me to read, that blessing has come to me, for I believe in the words of John, that in the beginning was the word (Jesus Christ,) the word Jesus Christ was with almighty power (God,) that Jesus Christ was, and is almighty power or God Almighty, and therefore I now know myself to be a christian man, who before, only thought myself so, because I had been baptized, but was ever a doubting one, a mere skeptic ; nor do I find among men in general, more certain knowledge than I had, no, not even in the ministry ; and why ? because our forms are all couched in terms so general as to render them obscure or ambiguous, and no attempts are ever made to define them in terms less obscure, or less ambiguous, If the eternal godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ were the unhesitating and clearly-expressed faith in which we were baptized into his church, we should have no schismatics but of Satan's own children. I shall defer giving any opinions on the confirmation, or baptism with the Holy Ghost or Spirit of our Lord, until I have read to you a note I made from one of the Hermit's discourses last Sunday. I am sure you will excuse me, my worthy host, and I hope I may now truly say, my brother-in-the-Lord, even though I may not be quite so orthodox as brother Theophilus, as not to bear without humble observations on the wrong done, or failings and faults by episcopal clergymen. It will save you the trouble, my friend, of repeating what you have once so well said.

## NOTES OF THE HERMIT'S SERMON.

Deut. xviii, 15-19. Matt. xvii, 1-8. Matt. xxviii, 19, 20. Mark. xvi, 15-20. Acts xxxvii, 39.

ON the last Sunday, my friends, I ventured to give you a very slight sketch of the origin of baptism, as a christian rite or ceremony, by which we are received into Christ's family, as his own children. In that I told you, on the authority of history, that it was adopted by all people, even from the days of the flood, as a religious ceremony, with a double purpose and intent. 1st. To commemorate the fall of our first earthly parents, by which their souls became polluted by sin, and their bodies subject to defilements, and as water was, and is, usually the element by which natural defilements are washed from the natural body, so was it used in a mystical sense, as a figure or shadow of the Holy Spirit, by whose operations only, the soul or spirit of a man could be cleansed from the pollution contracted by our first parents, in the fall by disobedience. Thus it was the sign of repentance for that sin, called original sin, or the sin of Adam and Eve, which entailed on all their race, pollution and defilement, even from their generation unto their death; and as all prayers in the first ages of the world, and even to the days of our blessed Saviour on earth, were acted out by some signification and figurative ceremony, so this ceremony of washing or baptism, was (I have no doubt from the clear reason of the thing,) the mode of supplicating God Almighty to renew his Holy Spirit within the children of Adam, which Holy Spirit of God had quitted him, the instant he admitted an evil spirit, even Satan, to counsel and to guide him.

2d. After the flood, the baptism or washing by water, was, in addition to its ancient use as a means of supplicating a renewal of the Holy Spirit, used in commemoration of the destruction of the old world, and salvation of the family of Noah, and in them, of us, their children, by water, and as a mode of acting out a supplication or prayer, according to the most ancient usage, that God Almighty would remember his gracious promise at that time, no more to destroy the world by water; that in religious use it might thenceforth be consecrated only to man's salvation, as it had been in that most awful baptism to the eight souls saved.

In the law of Moses, baptism or washing was used re-

ligiously after every defilement of the flesh; not only as necessary to the health of the body, but also in commemoration of the pollution of the inner man by sin, and of its typical use as a means of salvation to purge or purify the soul.

The heathens, in their religious use of baptism, were used to accompany its ceremony by a figure or emblematical representation of the Ark; and the same is alluded to in the history of Moses, who was saved in an ark of bulrushes, and received his name therefrom. So also is the religious or sacramental use of water particularly alluded to by Saint Paul, and applied figuratively to the passage of the Red Sea, wherein they are said to have been baptized, but certainly not immersed. Pharaoh indeed was immersed, but not saved thereby. And here again, as observed last Sunday, it was the means of salvation to God's elect, and destruction to the reprobate Egyptians. Whence baptism was used always by the Israelites in the adoption of converts or proselytes into their tribes or families, to entitle them to become partakers of both the temporal and spiritual privileges and inheritance with the children of Jacob or Israel. Until so received by baptism, they were (if Gentiles,) considered unclean, and could not be received into the holy congregation until adopted by a family in Israel, in the very ceremony which purified them, with their wives, their sons and their daughters, even their little ones, (though just born,) who were entitled by their ties of nature to share their parents' privileges.

As I have more than once or twice explained for your information, they were by the very act of baptism considered by that deed (in remembrance of the destruction of the old world by water, and more recently of Pharaoh and his host by the same element, and the salvation of Noah and their fathers,) dead to all their former relations in the world, were no longer answerable for the deeds they may have done in the old body, whilst in slavery to sin and Satan, as all Gentiles were reputed to be; and when they arose purified by the waters of baptism, they were said to have been born again, to have become new creatures, to have been regenerated — the old man was said to be dead in them, and they born to a life of righteousness; and really so in the eye of the law, and spiritually so, if they were really and truly in the faith, and did believe the promises of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose seed by faith and baptism they

were now become, and therefore the font used in baptism was, by the early christians, after the practice of the Jews, called the laver of regeneration, and the words regeneration, and baptism, and the new birth, were commonly used as meaning precisely the same thing.

Unless, my friends, we were much more intimate with the writings of the Jews, you are not likely to have become acquainted with the literal history and figurative meaning of this institution of the ceremony of baptism, as it existed for ages before either John the Baptist or our Saviour were born into the world. By them it was no new institution, and therefore, as being known and understood by all men, we see why the ceremony was never particularly described in the scriptures, neither is the rite of circumcision itself, so that very many pious and good christians are really ignorant of the precise nature of the practice, and almost all of its true figurative meaning, which I will take some other occasion to explain to you. Many presumptuous people, being remote from those who have continued these practices from the remotest times of their fathers, without interruption, have given license to their imagination, and substituted their own fancies for ancient practice.

Some there are who reject outward ceremony altogether, and merely fancy themselves baptized in the Spirit, as those men who seem to walk so blamelessly in their worldly relations, the Quakers.

Others there are, who attach all the saving property of baptism to immersion in an ocean of water, and to their own fancies as to the form and manner of it.

Others again believe that a little water sprinkled or poured on the head, in the manner of anointing, is quite sufficient to prove their willing obedience to our Lord's command to baptize all people, and that the operation of his Holy Spirit, is in no wise affected by the quantity of water, so long as water be actually used. The Quakers are certainly wrong, for they do not obey Christ's command. Both the others may be right; but the faith of the last, described in the sacramental and spiritual effect of baptism, does to me seem most unobjectionable on every scripture view, and most consistent with its history.

We are told that the Indians on this continent of America, are Israelites, and many of their customs justify such a conclusion. But let us imagine that a sect were to start up among them, insisting on the performance of the

ancient rite of circumcision, as a sacramental observance, and that the true mode of performing it, as taken from the evident meaning of the word in its literal signification, and from the well-known practice of all their tribes, and thus should insist on actual scalping, either wholly or partially, who could prove them wrong from scripture? Some of our sects, who fancy that scripture must strictly define every existing usage it speaks of, are not less absurd; for we ought all to know that religion, all religion except perhaps the Mosaic, and that too was so in many essential particulars, has been continued through succeeding ages by tradition, by habits and customs. But because our Lord rebuked the Pharisees for falsifying scripture by their traditions, and we accuse the Roman church of doing the same thing, many mistaken people presume that all traditions must be false, or at least that they cannot be brought to the standard of truth. But surely such persons cannot have considered that christianity itself was little other than tradition for near three hundred years of its best days, and almost through the times of the Roman church, was practically traditional, and therefore too easily admitted corruptions.

But to return to the institution of baptism as a christian rite, and the very first ordinance whereby we can become entitled to the name.

Academicus observed that there was also some mention made of Sherlock on the immortality of the soul, as having shown the natural philosophy of the relations of father and son in the God-head, in a familiar analogy easy to be understood, manifesting that relation as truly existing, and our relations as somewhat truly depending thereon, which I did not note. But that book seems worth referring to, since Hermit thought it worth quoting to his hearers, and I confess I have a strong desire to hear his opinions on the origin and philosophical explanation of its meaning, as referring to the death, burial and resurrection, of which by some people and a very numerous class of christians, it is sometimes thought to be an emblematic representation. I regret much that we did not hear the first part of this little essay, and I will confess, much as I am decidedly by reason opposed to levity and inclined to imperturbable seriousness, I could hardly contain myself then, and have actually since (when I remember the ridiculous but apposite sarcasm and satire on the baptistical notion of there being no baptism without immersion, by the abuse of circumcision

into scalping, and have, I say) several times detected myself absolutely in a broad laugh, which as I could not approve, I never explained to any of you. It is however no subject for laugh, levity or joke, for it is most lamentable to see sects formed on the definitions of words used eighteen hundred years ago, in a sense handed down to us by unbroken habits and customs, in a sense differing from their vain and presumptuous definitions. Yet these vain pretenders are followed by whole flocks of ignorant and foolish people, who pin their faith on such men, as pretending to have acquired more knowledge and religion by their wisdom, and learning, and prudence, than all the generations of their forefathers could obtain even by direct revelation. Our host's time I see is up, and as I have some further observations to offer, which may suffice for to-morrow's short evening, let us retire. All, good night.

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CONVERSATION TWELFTH.

*All being met before the log-fire as usual, and compliments over,*

HERMIT said: My friend Rusticus, our friends were so warmed with their subject last night, as to leave us no time to say a word, and Academicus has promised us leisure enough to make a further inroad on this box of beautiful Havana cigars, and perhaps if Theophilus were to join us, it might set Academicus more at ease; and since he is pleased to attribute to us, by God's grace, a conversion to a true and more definite comprehension of one doctrine of our faith which embraces every other, however recondite and abstruse they may seem, namely, the undivided person of the God-head of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom alone are comprised and manifested every character, office and attribute of the only one God, so I am in hopes we shall all be edified by his promised observations on the rite of confirmation, which he seems to have subjected to his inquiries of late.

RUSTICUS. I cannot say, my friends, but that I felt more appetite for the discussion of the weed of Havana, than I did to bear a part in the debate, in which I did not feel sufficient confidence in my knowledge on the subject to induce a desire to bear a part, which, however, must have something peculiarly interesting in it, since both Academicus and Thophy were much more an-

imated than usual. I shall gladly continue a listener, and I hope a learner.

THEOPHILUS. And I will join you in a cigar, and listen with pleasure to Kaddy's observations on confirmation.

ACADEMICUS. I am not vain enough to fancy, my friends, that you will reap much instruction from me on the subject, because I cannot presume to imagine myself sufficiently enlightened by the Holy Spirit, the gift of which is the subject in hand. A man cannot well presume to have knowledge on a subject in which he has had no experience. I have never yet been confirmed; therefore what can I know of it experimentally? And yet I will be bold enough, in the language of our neighbors, to tell my experience.

I was lately referring to, or rather reading over again, an interesting letter, some four or five years old, from my friend Nauticus. He was a religious man, of very cheerful habits, and seemed as little under the restraints of enthusiasm, (unless it was in his profession,) or of Puritanism, as any man I ever knew. He is now retired within the bosom of his family, and seems only to think of qualifying himself and family for holding posts of honor and emolument in heaven. He writes thus: "My dear young friend Kaddy: You are just entering on the world's stage; I am thinking of the necessary preparations for leaving it, with that sort of good report which shall insure to me a more important character or part to perform on the next stage on which we are destined to appear. For all this world is a stage, and the human race but actors. But the motus, the direction, the spirit and the real character of the personæ is behind the scenes, invisible to the spectators. This is the first act of the play of life. Before the second commences, all the performers must be congregated behind the scenes, and prepare for their coming parts. I do not mean to fatigue myself or you by pursuing a stale analogy. You may remember that I always endeavored to impress on you not to embark in the career of worldly ambition, because in it the race is seldom won by the swift, nor the battle by the strong; i. e. merit even the most transcendent is no pledge of success in those public services of army, navy, or even of the church as now conducted. I told you that I had given sixty years to the navy, and when I retired from it, I found myself almost in utter ignorance of every thing relating to eternity, and yet I had taken part in every service contained in our prayer-book. Of



the confirmation I indeed was not so ignorant as Apollon and his brethren. I had heard of a Holy Ghost, found the name in various parts of our customary services, and his name is there invoked, and blessings pronounced in it; but of his nature or distinct character in the Godhead, I knew nothing. I referred to every parson I knew, and they one and all told me that it was as clear as day-light, for that the Holy Ghost was the third person in the trinity, in which there are (they say) three persons perfectly distinct from each other, and they are all one God, three distinct beings, each capable of distinct action, in each all the powers of God vested, and each of them is God — yet not three Gods, but one God. I was referred by the said parsons to my prayer-book, to Athanasius' creed for all about it. This told me that each of these persons was incomprehensible, that is, not to be understood; yet that there was not three (persons or things not to be understood) incomprehensibles, but one incomprehensible. This the parsons assured me was the great mystery of (Babylon, I supposed) the Trinity, which all men must believe, and none understand. Believing our episcopal parsons must be right, and they unhesitatingly assured me there was good scripture proof of every syllable, they always left me to find this out, which probably I should never have been able to do satisfactorily, had I not fallen in with one William De Beauchamp, my brother officer, who put me on the right track. He told me that christians had a promise which made the great difference between them and our forefathers. This was the gift of the Holy Ghost, to guide them to the truth. How am I to get this noble gift? said I. By earnest but humble prayer to our Lord, said he; for unless we ask it, do you think we are likely to receive any extraordinary good gift? If you do not seek, he continued, do you think you are likely to find? But he concluded by saying, Have you been baptized with the Holy Ghost? I knew he did not usually joke on such subjects, so I answered, not that I know of. Pray, William, have you? This I have always been told, by both parsons and laymen of learning, was a sort of prophetic promise, intended for some future dispensation or age. Explain this to me, William, have you been baptized with the Holy Ghost? I have, said he, sought it by the only ordinary means, by the ordinance appointed by our Lord's apostles, as practiced by Peter and John at Samaria, and by Paul at Ephesus; by this earthly ordi-

nance called confirmation, I answer yes; I have been so baptized, and I faithfully believe that our Lord has therewith granted me the blessed gift in such fulness as is necessary for my guidance in my present station in life, and is ready and will grant me such further additions of this his grace as I will ask and seek, and as may seem good and right to his wisdom, in his overruling providence, general and special. By his spirit of truth, I believe he has taught me to know many things clearly, which before were mysterious to me, and are still so to many; and amongst others, that of Athanasius' creed, by which I hope I may have succeeded in communicating some light to you, and to him be all the praise and glory. Amen. Consider these things, my young friend, as the one thing needful "

This letter has long lain in my desk, disregarded after its first hasty reading, and containing much other matter which then interested me much more, would, perhaps, have lain there long without further notice, had not our Hermit have gone over much of the same ground in such a way as to draw my attention, and to bring this counsel of my friend Nauticus to my recollection.

HERMIT. I am very glad to hear any thing of my old friend Nauticus, and rejoice to know that he took those things which I then said, so kindly and so rightly, for it is due to your own ingenuousness to inform you that the De Beauchamp he spoke of is no other than your host, the Hermit. That was my titular designation, and since transferred from my person to this estate, now called Fairfield.

RUSTICUS. Well, I declare, that it is a very odd coincidence! I suppose I must not interrupt Academicus; but this is curious enough.

THEOPHILUS. It is remarkable, and might lead us backward to try to get more of Hermit's history, if we might have influence enough; for this I well know, that Rusticus would delight more in that than in these dry doctrinal details. Nor, I am sure, would Academicus and myself feel less pleasure, and from which, perhaps, we might draw as good moral lessons, as by these discourses. Nevertheless, I know our good host is now anxious as we are, to bring this subject before us to a close.

HERMIT. I cannot consent to interrupt Academicus, until he has informed us what are the fruits of his latter inquiries on the subject of confirmation; and I have

little cause to do so, since he has been pleased to make me speak through other channels. And I should feel flattered that he found any of my transient observations worth noting. Proceed then, good Academicus.

ACADEMICUS. I have taken more pains to satisfy myself on this subject, because the Episcopal churches are thereon, I think, at issue with all other sects of christians. I remembered something of the notice of Nauticus, but never have heard the word used, viz: baptizing with the holy spirit, in any part of the church services, or ordinances, unless in obscure and ambiguous terms. Since these conversations of ours at Fairfield, I have been awakened to the inquiry by Hermit's remarks on our total neglect of the authority and governing office of the Holy Ghost, in the ordinations of all who call themselves Christ's ministers, of every known sect or denomination. If indeed, (said I,) the same holy spirit ruled in every church as in those of primitive times, how comes it that such a diversity of opinions, practices, and ordinances exist among them, who claim to be governed by the same holy spirit? Have any of these differing churches really received the holy ghost? and which are they, if any have? And thus I continued to soliloquize: Have I myself received this holy ghost? The Episcopal parsons tell me I have; that this took place at my baptism. I referred to that service, and I could not find any notice of any distinct rite or ordinance of a visible nature, where that gift was visibly given me; but I find that it is assumed, because it is promised, (I suppose by Peter,) that if we are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, we shall receive the holy ghost, which it is presumed will then be done, whether invoked or not, whether specifically claimed or not, although not communicated by the formal imposition of hands, or any other special and evident holy ceremony. It seems in the service at baptism, it is taken for granted, that by the act of baptizing with water, the holy spirit is then and there communicated also, for which we give thanks at the conclusion. But in the service for adults, the thanks are concluded by a prayer for the gift of the spirit of our Lord, but there is here no actual or formal transmission from the minister in the name of the Lord, to the baptized with water, of the holy ghost. I was baptized as an infant, therefore never yet have received a formal or ceremonial gift of this holy spirit. And whether it has pleased God, by his special grace, to give me any special

portion of his spirit to guide and to govern me, in virtue of my early baptism, I know not. But I recognize in myself no gifts, manifestly supernatural, nor any by which I can distinguish myself from an unbaptized man, or from an unregenerate christian.

I then turned to the confirmation service, and there also find room for some doubts. The bishop confirming, says in his first prayer, that the persons have already been regenerate by God's grace, by water and the holy ghost; then he prays that they may be strengthened with the holy ghost the comforter, and daily to increase in them the gifts of grace, some of which are enumerated, and some in Paul's catalogue omitted. So far as it goes, this seems to me, who have no pretensions to extraordinary knowledge, a proper prayer, but does not seem to me to go far enough.

Then follows the imposition of hands, and the special invocation, and prayer for them severally, for an increase of the holy spirit, more and more, &c.

Thus neither in the ordinance of baptism, nor in confirmation, is there any unequivocal gift of the holy ghost, by any overt act, or declared word of either bishop or priest or deacon, or other, by which the gift of the holy ghost is given, or in plain words, by which such gift of the holy ghost can be inferred to have been given, by any person, as having authority from the Lord so to communicate this most precious gift.

If, indeed, the bishop or priest, or other, had himself received such a commission unequivocally from the Lord, why is the recipient left in any doubt? If the bishop feels himself to be an acknowledged successor to the apostles by our Lord's own appointment, would he not use some positive form of words, such as the following? "Receive the gift of the holy ghost, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, &c. &c. &c., by such tokens and manifest gifts as our Lord may please to bestow on them, to his own praise, honor and glory for ever and ever, Amen." This would leave no room for doubt or evasion; and there seems no reason to doubt, that, according to their faith it would be done as our Lord himself has so graciously promised; and I cannot but observe, that even our good host some years ago, as De Beauchamp, did not answer himself the question he had before put to his comrade, Nauticus, so directly as could have been wished. You have heard that he modified his answer as if there were some obscuri-

ty or doubt hanging still on his own mind. This examination of our ordinances of baptism and confirmation should rather have been explained by Theophilus, and I fear I may subject myself to some severe remarks from him for venturing again on holy ground to call these ordinances in question. I will, however, now venture to put the question to both Hermit and Theophilus. Have ye received the holy ghost ?

HERMIT. I am not anxious to offer any further observations until I shall have heard what all of you shall say on the subject. Our friend Rusticus has yet had no room for a word. This question, however, is now fairly between Theophilus and Academicus, and neither Rusticus nor myself can yet interfere with it. We get on, however, rather slowly, for we have not, all of us together, established one convert in the church and in the faith. Theophilus, answer the question of Academicus.

THEOPHILUS. My friend has again put me on the defensive, which I feel is not my vantage-ground. I will first answer for myself, so far as the question respects the rite of confirmation. At the proper age my father took care that I should be presented to our bishop, and I was confirmed. And if to be baptized and confirmed is to receive the holy ghost, why then I have so received it. But still my acute friend will say, there is something like shuffling and evasion in this modified answer: he will tell me that I ought to answer categorically, straight, yes or no. But this would leave my meaning subject to be misunderstood. If I answer yes, I may be interpreted to assert that I have received some of the supernatural endowments of the holy spirit, such as the speaking with tongues, and prophesying, which I have not received. If I answer no, I should deny my faith, for I believe that I have so received the holy ghost, as that he dwells in me, and subjects my inner man to his own rule and guidance, and that without such indwelling spirit, my inner man would not be subjected to any restraint in its natural disposition to corrupt and evil affections. I believe that without this indwelling holy spirit, I could do no one good thing, and certainly nothing acceptable to our Lord. I feel and I know, that by this holy spirit, of which I believe myself a living temple, my evil propensities and passions are subjected to its restraints. But this spirit does only manifest itself by its fruits, by good works, which, without his secret influence, I know I could not do; but no otherwise is the Holy Ghost within

me, manifested to the world without me. These I understand our church to call the ordinary gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost. My faith is, that I have received this gift of grace and his Holy Spirit in such measure as it hath pleased the Lord to see fit to bestow them, and this is communicated to me by the miraculous or supernatural divine agency of the power of our Lord, as much and as surely as the other more openly manifested gifts of the Spirit are, which are usually called the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, such as speaking with new tongues, casting out devils, taking up serpents, and drinking any thing deadly, without hurt, and healing the sick by laying on of hands; to none of these extraordinary gifts have I attained. I have not attained to these, and yet I have full faith that our Lord Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, that he is God, and I do believe fully and unreservedly all the doctrines in our creeds, relative to the distinct offices of Father, Son and Holy Spirit; called commonly, persons, in the creed of Athanasius, as put into English, seemingly, as shown by Hermit heretofore, very incautiously; for person in English means a very different thing from *personæ*, Latin, or *prosopon*, Greek, of which it is the translation; for these decidedly mean, a mask, a visage, a part performed in a play, an office, a character, a mode of manifestation; so understanding the word person, that creed becomes no mystery, as shown to us so clearly by Hermit on Thursday week past, and which I have but adverted to, because by the letter of Nauticus, in which this creed is prominently remarked upon, it appears that our host has long been in the habit of endeavoring to reconcile old Athanasius with the world.

RUSTICUS. We must not, worthy host, trespass on your time to-night. It is your preparation for the Sabbath service. To-morrow I will endeavor to explain my notions on the initiatory ordinances of christianity, rather in the way of a report to you, my good Hermit, what progress I may have made under your discipleship, than with the vain notion of offering to you any thing new. But you have demanded it, and therefore, to-morrow I also will give my opinion, God willing.

HERMIT. I thank you sincerely for your consideration for my habits; the subject of the great christian privilege, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, will, as you see, now you are fairly engaged in it, occupy us all, at least, for to-morrow; and Academicus I see, has prepared much

more, on the difficulties which are to be encountered yet in this investigation. It is time, too, to hear our friend Rusticus, for he has really been the picture of patience. Good night, my friends; may the blessing of God Almighty, in our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Ghost, be with us all, Amen.

ALL. Amen.

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THIRTEENTH CONVERSATION.

ACADEMICUS. Hermit, in your simple discourses of this day, you have, in the few observations you made, given Theophilus and myself a lesson. You have shown us that by a simple reference to the texts where the gifts of the Holy Ghost are spoken of, we might have saved ourselves many words; and surely, my friend Theophilus never stood on more slippery ground than that he assumed last night, nor was there ever a more tame attempt made at a description of the operation of the Holy Spirit of the Lord God Almighty, the Creator and Ruler of Heaven and Earth. It is, indeed, the Holy Ghost who operates in Socinians and Unitarians, to bring forth the fruits of moral good works in which they challenge other christians to compare with them; this cannot be, or they are in open rebellion, for they will not acknowledge the fact of any extraordinary operations of any spirit, save only the natural spirit of man; therefore this test, so far as regards the world external to a man's own self, is arbitrary and delusive. Oh no! Receiving the Holy Ghost seems, by the scriptures you quoted, to mean something that cannot be misunderstood by christians; at least, not by those who have received it.

RUSTICUS. My friends, I am not anxious to interpose any of my observations between you on this subject, of which I know too little myself to deem any I can offer of importance to you, who are so much more learned; but our host has laid his commands on me, and has, moreover, shown me, by what he said on the subject in church, how to go to work, *secundem artem*, according to rule. Let us, then, read some of the texts he referred to. Matthew iii. 11 — John the Baptist says, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. He shall baptize you with the Holy

Ghost, and with fire," &c. &c. Mark i. 8 — "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Luke iii. 16, same as Matthew. John i. 33 — "The same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Matthew xxviii. 19, 20 — "Go ye into all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, baptizing them in the *name* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world, Amen." Acts i. 5 — "For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts xix. 2, 6; ii. 38 — "And ye shall receive the Holy Ghost." Acts x. 44 — "And the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word;" 47, "for they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." Acts xix. 6 — "Then when Paul had laid his hands on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." Acts viii. 17 — "Then laid they their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost." Here in these few texts is abundant authority to decide of whom the baptism with the Holy Ghost is, and namely, from our Lord himself. It was the gift, including every other good spiritual gift, which our Lord obtained from his Father, the power to dispense or to give to the children of men; it was his own spirit, and the spirit of his Almighty Father. By this gift we can easily understand how we become one, perfectly one in our renewed nature, our new birth, by this baptism with the Holy Ghost; for as he graciously took our nature on himself, he became one with us, in the flesh. Now by the baptism with his spirit, which is his divine nature, his spiritual and Godly nature, and as by a new and spiritual birth, we become one in nature; in our new nature the new creature, one with him in body and soul, in the flesh and in the spirit; and by him as the medium or mediator, we also become one with the Father in spirit and truth, John xvii. Thus, as it appears to me, it can hardly be called a mystery, for it seems to me quite natural, that as our Lord, who was divine, who was God, and a pure Spirit, took on himself our nature to become one with us therein, viz: in our human nature; so by his grace he gives us, who are his children, his spirit, that we may become one with him in his divine and spiritual nature; and he as our head, (of one human and divine nature imitated, in which we are members of his body, actuated in the new creature, by his one only spirit, even the Holy Ghost,) has in this our



new nature, achieved for us a conquest over sin and death; and if we hold fast the faith that must necessarily result from any sensible manifestation of the Holy Ghost within us, then is our salvation assured to us even now, and our final redemption has thus received our Lord's own seal; that it is as certain as that we now live in Christ, and that our future resurrection to everlasting glory with our Lord, is as sure as death is to every mortal. I may, perhaps, have used some reiteration, or a little tautology, in my anxiety to make myself clearly understood, if I can, in this, which I should call the divine mechanism of christianity, or christian metaphysics, in which I have used my best ability to demonstrate it as a great christian problem. If, therefore, I have at all succeeded, there cannot remain a doubt but that this baptism with the Holy Ghost is the most essential part of our inauguration into the church or body of Christ, without which, indeed, there can be no church at all, and without which no man can become a member of Christ's body; for if we have not one and the same spirit, we cannot be members of any one body; for just imagine, if each of your legs and arms should be made subject to a spirit other than that which is in the head, could they really be considered as members of the same body as those members which are subject to the head? Oh no! Such limbs would be incumbrances to a body subjected to another head; they must be cut off, that they fetter not the other members. Herein we may see a shadow of the moral lesson conveyed by our Lord, when he said, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it away, for it is better that you enter into the kingdom of God, wanting a limb, than that thou shouldst be condemned," &c. &c. Considering the all-absorbing importance of this truth, we can hardly wonder that the Quakers, and many other enthusiasts, should have made so many mistakes about it, and that very great mistake of all mistakes, that our Lord, having appointed the means by which he will give these gifts by human ordinances, will not demand from these enthusiastic professors, who seek the gifts, that they shall come to him, by the method which he has been pleased to point out; but because he still reserves to himself the power to bestow these gifts, independently of those ordinances; and sometimes really does so, so they, by their fancied self-importance, assume that our Lord will give these great gifts to their prayers, without attending to

any other of his appointed ordinances. Nay more, they necessarily become fatalists or infidels, after a course of such errors, and consider prayer itself unnecessary ; for, say they, does not God know all our wants and necessities better than we do ? Can we alter the course of universal providence by prayer ? &c. I answer to both these questions, decidedly, yes. For he has himself appointed certain modes of prayer, of worship, of praise, of thanksgiving, by which, if I may so say, he places the very laws of the creation and of his providence at the disposal of his children, members of Christ's body, and subject to Almighty power itself. The strongest thing in the world are the prayers of the righteous, of whom our Lord is head over all, all-blessed for ever. The heathens of old considered the gods subject to fate. Our Lord has subjected fate to faith.

You must pardon me, my friends, for slipping into rhapsody. You have kept me tongue-tied for two evenings, but for fear of getting out of my depth, I will now return to my texts.

We learn by them, that the dispensation of these gifts of the Holy Ghost was made subject to an apostolic ordinance ; that the power of transfusing or transmitting the Holy Ghost was not given even to the seven first appointed deacons, and although Philip could work miracles, and cast out devils, yet at Samaria, he had not the power to give the Holy Ghost, much less was this power given to any in the congregation, in virtue of themselves having received it, for then Simon Magus needed not to purchase it. To him we know this power of giving was refused, although, as it would appear, he had received the Holy Ghost. But this Simon (history, not the bible, says,) became the first dissenter, set up a sect of his own in Rome, and usurping the right which Peter refused to sell or to give him, he pretended to the power of dispensing holy gifts, and thus became a prophetic type of the papacy itself, which, like him, will also be destroyed in the end.

All presbyterian as I am, I cannot see, after all I have heard from Theophilus and Hermit, how we can do without some standard to know who has the power, humanly speaking, to dispense this great, the greatest of all gifts. By human succession, the bishops should have this power ; and if they held their offices dependent on the Lord and his Holy Spirit only, and had faith as a grain of mustard seed, I have no doubt but the gifts of the Holy Spirit .

would be restored to the church, We appear to be in a dilemma. If this power is in the church at all, by its original charter and constitution, handed down to it by legitimate succession, not merely by tradition, but by continued usage, it must be in the bishops, and if it is not there, where are we to look for it? To what sect shall we turn to find the Holy Ghost? If he be not in the church, much less can he be in any separated members, who indeed pretend not to the power of giving or continuing such gifts: yet all the separatists make the greatest pretensions to the actual gifts of the spirit, and own no dependence on any human ordinance, but only on the free grace of the Lord; for receiving them, our Lord himself will be their judge. But it appears to me much of a similar case to our lord Loveall, who being rich, and having many poor neighbors, he collected great store of bread, and proclaimed to all, that whoever required bread, he would give it to them, even as much as they could use, if they would, between the hours of six o'clock and noon every day, walk up the great avenue to the front of his mansion, and knock three times with the knocker there suspended for the purpose; then (said the proclamation) will my servants who know the sound, be ready to distribute to all who so come, as much as they can carry away with them. Let us suppose some sturdy and impudent beggars, who, allured by the promise of the proclamation, and yet despising the mode pointed out by it, should boldly enter the lord's mansion by the back door, and intruding on his private apartments, should present themselves before him, and coolly say, My lord, we have heard of your great bounty, and are come to claim it from your lordship. We may fancy that he might answer, My friends, how did you hear of this? Your servants, my lord, have proclaimed it every where. Did they proclaim at the same time how that my bounty was to be demanded, and by what regulation it was to be obtained? Yes, they did; but we thought the directions they gave were only to assume consequence to themselves, who were mere distributors of your lordship's bounty, and the way by the front avenue is round about, and so we came a shorter way; and besides, they say that your servants riot and waste and fatten themselves on your bounty, and do not distribute to all as your lordship in the proclamation was pleased to promise; besides, we do not like to have any thing to do with livery servants. We are free men, and

prefer coming to you straight; for it is your bounty they distribute. It is not their own, and we know you are ever ready to give to the needy even with your own hands; for we should feel degraded if we submitted to stoop to the pride of those fat, lazy, overfed servants of yours; and besides, they wear a livery. We hate all liveries, and all them that like such badges of slavery.

The lord would, I suppose, answer thus; for he could not be unkind even to an enemy, much less to men professing friendship and respect. My friends, I am afraid you have not acquired my true character, nor the object of my bounty. You believe the proclamation as to the bounty; why did you not believe it as to the way of entitling yourselves to it? You charge my servants with not obeying my orders. Have you found this charge true as to yourselves? No, my lord, we did not like to have any thing to do with those men, when we could come to your lordship straight right away; for we know that those wicked servants of yours have nothing of their own to give, and we would much rather take your bounty from your own hand. So then, those my servants have not disobeyed my orders in your particulars? Oh no, we never tried them, but we have heard no good report of them. So then lord Loveall called his servants, and told them that those men did not understand his proclamation. Take them out, said he, "and put them forth by the way they should have come; and when they come by the way appointed, let them partake of my bounty. But be ye careful, my servants, that ye merit not the ill report which these men bring of you; for I shall inquire into your conduct when you come for your wages."

I will not pursue the analogy of this parable, if I may so call it. So then, really, I see now no way of rightly going to that heavenly mansion, but by the long, straight avenue that leads to the front door, Be baptized by a regularly authorized minister. Be confirmed by a bishop. By this way it is not denied that salvation may be had. By any other, it is doubtful.

I doubt not but that our Hermit will show us some practicable method by which these various and conflicting opinions of men may be reconciled, and how all good christians, at least, may become of one mind, one lip, one faith, one baptism, and unite heart, hand and voice, to serve the one only lord Loveall, even Jesus Christ. Amen.

With regard to the delinquencies of the ministry, it may still be said, as in the days of our Lord, they sit in

Moses' seat. Follow them not in evil, but do as they say in the name of the Lord. Even a wicked minister cannot nullify the appointed ordinances, and the Lord may suffer them for our own sins. But if they were the apostles themselves, or angels, would this generation receive them? If they be wrong, they are accountable to their own master. If they be right, those who neglect the ordinances established by the Lord himself assuredly are in danger. One mark the church has of their truly apostolic origin, and true succession; men speak ill of them, and revile them, and many would utterly destroy them, and think they did God a service. Should we not rather pray for them, that the Lord would vouchsafe to visit them by his grace and Holy Spirit? And as he planted his one church amidst a wicked generation, will he not also purge and rectify it, if we seek him by prayer, and fasting, and sorrow for our own sins? And if that church which our Lord has built on such a holy foundation, and with such goodly stones of his own choosing, and built upon his own plan, be found subject like our mortal bodies to decay, shall Calvin, Wesley, or Campbell, or any other less gifted men, imagine that by pulling the materials out of the old building, and with them erecting another on their own plan, that it will be more to our Lord's liking than his own? that it will be faultless and immortal? Would it not be more rational to try to repair the breaches in the old one? It is true, indeed, that all these evils of perpetual division and schism in the Lord's body, the church, have perhaps been entailed on us by the Roman antichristian corruptions and usurpations, of which our own church is not quite free. But we should think it an odd way of establishing the public and political weal of the state, if, because its laws and institutions are not quite perfect, and perhaps in some instances, corrupt and evil, we should think ourselves at liberty to break it up into smaller independent communities. Neither can we suppose that our Lord and King will be pleased to see his church, his body, split into a thousand independent members, like Solomon's household.

HERMIT. I was in hopes our friend Rusticus would have favored us with his views of the nature and manifestations of those gifts of the Holy Spirit, by which we might certainly know it to be really the spirit of the Lord: try the spirits, whether they be in truth the spirit of the Lord. This, as it appears to me, can only be done

by the sword of the spirit, the word of God in the holy scriptures; on which subject I will endeavor to offer some observations; but in the first place must thank you all for the pleasure and satisfaction I have received from your several remarks on the inauguration of a man into the mysteries of the christian faith; and perhaps it will be as necessary to enable him to distinguish what is true faith, the faith of Abraham, on which I may say a few word also. I may then try to furnish a rule for knowing a true church from a false one; and lastly, I shall proceed to show how a true church may be congregated or associated on practical principles, and subjected to our Lord and his Holy Spirit, in which perhaps I may offer some suggestions by which all who profess and call themselves christians, may be brought under one rule of government. I should like also to provoke you to furnish me with some notions on extempore prayer, too often, perhaps, assumed as a sure sign of its being the dictate of the Holy Spirit. On these several subjects, I hope I shall, as usual, have the advantage of your remarks; many of them indeed have already fallen under our notice, in one shape or another, but in too loose and desultory a way to make use of for practical application. This course which I have marked out will perhaps furnish us subject matter; and in your leisure moments, I wish you would turn your attention to some heresies which are noticed in scripture — as the ways of Korah, the errors of Balaam, of the Nicolaitans, and of Simon Magus in particular; of the errors of the Gnostics, and the Nicolaitans. Perhaps you, Academicus, will glance over Thelyphora. You will find it in my library. And Theophilus I think will do well to arm himself for the defence of the Oxford Tracts, or to take a fair view of their errors, for which ancient christianity may, perhaps, furnish the antidote.

ACADEMICUS. I am indeed very thankful that my parents decided for me in my infancy, and gave me a title to consider myself a christian, before I could be left to my own judgment; for had I been left to this day, I should have been at a loss how to decide as to the right mode of dedicating myself to christianity amidst so many conflicting opinions; and as to taking our measure of any man's having the Holy Spirit, that is, whether he has been truly converted to our Lord by the apparent success of his ministry, by works of which we can have no means of estimating the value, this is too uncertain a rule. I confess I agree with Rusticus, that if we find a

church built after the seeming model in scripture, founded by the apostles themselves, continued from their time by unquestionable human institutions, professing and denying not the same faith they taught, I see not what more the individual can want. Thus I have been baptized in the church of my fathers. So far I am all right. I have been instructed in the catechism, and the scriptures have been put into my hands. I am told that I have been born again, that I have the Holy Ghost. But I feel none of those sensible signs of his presence which are noted in the texts mentioning them, and among my friends, even Hermit and Theophilus, and the clergy of my acquaintance, I see no visible signs manifested of the presence of the same spirit. What then am I to infer? Shall I say that none of these have the Holy Spirit? I can say no such thing. But this I can say truly; they nor you, my friends, do claim the powers this Spirit has promised when present; therefore you do not show by your works, incontestibly, that he is present with you. So in myself, I have never presumed to think that I had in any extraordinary sense, different from the mass of christians I meet, any sensible indications of the Holy Spirit's peculiar presence. I now perceive by what I have heard here, that I have never sought this gift by the only legitimate way of earthly (so to say) transmission. I have never been confirmed, and whatever may be the defects of that ordinance in any one church, yet it is acknowledged that so far as the ordinance itself goes, it means either to give for the first time, or to renew that given already in baptism, that spirit of our Lord which we seek; and any man who wilfully or presumptuously neglects that ordinance, has no pretensions to it. Our Lord may indeed give us that spirit otherwise, but it is in this way that he has promised it; (at least I think I learn so here;) therefore I am resolved, for my part, to lay my claim for this most precious gift by this ordinance, as soon as possible, by episcopal confirmation.

I see, too, why I cannot turn to the Roman church, because she has sealed her apostacy in the act of the Council of Trent, by which she has set up another doctrine than that taught by our Lord and his apostles. So can I not be of her communion, without endangering my salvation; because I cannot obey the decree of the pope and the Council of Trent, and obey the scriptures, also. Had I been received into the Roman church in ignorance of her errors, I should have felt myself bound to

renounce her errors, but not to renounce the promises received through her ordinances, but in so far as I might justly defer to opinions on which I had more confidence than on my own. Thus I now see that Theophilus has had very frequently the best of the argument, when I thought he was in error. The holy ordinances of the apostles established in the flesh, as signs, or testimonies, or what we will, of spiritual operations, may be transmitted in the flesh, by succession, without detracting from their spiritual efficacy to the recipient, provided he, not they, have the true faith, which alone can render them truly efficacious. There is much yet which might and does require the discrimination of saving faith in all these ordinances; for in themselves they can do nothing for us, but by the grace of God, being acquiesced in on our part, by a true and lively faith, they may, and doubtless will be made efficacious by the same grace. Thus I believe that a christian man or woman, or youth, seeking the gift of the Holy Ghost through him, who by succession from the apostles in the flesh, that is, by the ordinance, or usage acknowledged among christians, as the proper mode of inheriting on earth the right to bestow this gift, will, if the recipient himself have true faith in our Lord's promises, assure him truly that he will receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, whether the bishop have those gifts himself or no, which he pretends to bestow by the right of office.

But if I know one such bishop, who by manifest endowment had the Holy Spirit, who spake by tongues, and did other works to the evident honor of our Lord, miraculously, undoubtedly I should prefer a reference to him for the holy spiritual gifts, than to one who had the sign in the flesh or by inheritance only, without the apostolical signs following. The church of England, therefore, seems to me to contain all that is essential to the right of receiving a christian man, and the entire spiritual endowment of such an one, within the pale of the christian church and Christ's own family on earth, as to all the earthly mechanism necessary to associate him in that family, with full right thereby to claim from our loving Father and Lord, all the promises of an eternal inheritance which he has so graciously promised to all his children so adopted. I have been more particular in thus reading the recantation of my philosophical skepticism, to remove from Hermit the necessity on my account, of following into detail all the rules for a young



christian, by which to choose his church ; and I may add a word or two for the same reason as to the other alternatives which appear to present themselves, assuming the points of faith decided, as they have been, or seem to be, as to all their essentials, in the course of our conversations. 1. Suppose I were to turn to the Lutherans. The ministerial succession with them seems broken, and the link of human testimony is thereby broken as to their right to give the Holy Ghost, if indeed the Lutheran bishop had miraculous powers to testify to the power he assumed, then his authority would be unquestionable, whether he stood in the order of apostolic succession or not, but failing in miraculous powers himself, no man can have any such authority unless he can show it to be derived by him from the apostles. So if I turn to the Calvinists, all ends upwards at Calvin, and all in futurity may be said to begin with Calvin ; and so with all other sects, all on the subject of spiritual gifts, seems usurpation and confusion. There is a pretty analogy in the history of Freemasons. Their origin is buried in obscurity, but the modern associations or the revival arose in England and thence spread with more or less success over all the world. At length a species of new light sprang up among them, and a new sect, calling itself Ancient Masons arose, which have departed much from the simplicity of their parent stock, so far as history enables us to trace them. These ancients are said to have loaded their associations with many rites and ceremonies, not required by their elder brethren ; nevertheless, they do contain all that the primitive associations require for admission and fraternity. But the love of change thus indulged with some success in one instance, has led the masons, like the christians, into interminable sects. Thus divided, they have fallen, and although still known, and in England much honored, their reputation has seen its best days, as indeed it seems fit it should, for as a moral association it does not seem based on pure religion, at least, not on pure christianity, which alone can give any system of morals eternal life, or universality.

For my part, I see not how a baptist of any of the forty sects of that denomination, whilst he assumes the name of baptist, can be a catholic christian. Nor do I see, how a Wesleyan or Whitfieldite, Presbyterian, Jumper, Mumper, Irvinite or Mormon, can be a catholic christian. Yet I feel that I could freely commune with any of these who profess their faith in the triune God-

head of our Lord Jesus Christ, and who do not impose any human or unscriptural dogmas on their followers as things to be believed or practiced as necessary to salvation. But I can never lend even seeming indulgence to any sect professing itself christian, which attaches to our Lord the notion of his being a mere creature, and not also the mighty Pantocrator, the Almighty Creator himself, although he was once graciously pleased to manifest himself to, and for us, in a more humble character, viz: the form of a man, and this blessing, by God's grace, and your instructive conversations, with the researches we have made in the book called revelations, I am indebted to you, Mr. Hermit; for, under the blessing of our Lord's Holy Spirit as there promised, and as you and my friend Theophilus are christians of the Episcopal church of England, I most willingly cast my lot in with yours, and now believe, that although there may be many negligent, nay, wicked persons in it, and that it stands much in need of reformation in its discipline, yet that the devout christian may therein assure himself of all the blessings promised by our Lord, of which, as a Roman papist, or sectarian of any denomination, I could not so easily assure myself; for these also, I fear, have their negligent, nay, wicked pastors, to which they superadd presumption, for they daringly usurp the office. I have made this confession to save the time of our friend Hermit, as far as his present company are concerned, and I must think from what has passed, that Rusticus is much of the same mind.

It is however no less incumbent on us to pursue our inquiry into the subjects in which we may hold erroneous opinions still, and I doubt not but that the Spirit of the Lord, even the Holy Ghost, will also assist us herein, particularly I shall, as directed by Hermit, make some researches on the Balaamites and Nicolaitans, and peruse Thelyphthora with care, and I must conclude this confession of my faith, which Hermit has taught me to be so bold in, by God's grace, by still confessing that I am yet at great loss how to decide on those gifts of the Holy Spirit which ought still to be manifested in a true church, and to which I have understood some sects do lay positive claim, for in truth I must believe that wherever these may be truly manifested, the Spirit of truth in myself, would urge me to associate specially. Hermit has promised to speak to this point — the trial of the Spirits: let us therefore hear him.

HERMIT. My dear Academicus, you have relieved me of a great weight and burden; your convictions are just, and may assure you that whether confirmed or not, according to Episcopal form, the grace of God's Holy Spirit is not withholden from you. The first Gentile converts had the gifts without the formal imposition of hands, and our Lord bestows the same where he will, but you are quite right, he has established an ordinance; our faith demands obedience. Our Lord himself, even in his baptism, established the sure rule, "Thus it behooves us to fulfil all righteousness." Both you and Rusticus will, I trust, seek the imposition of Episcopal hands, and I have a perfect assurance that he who does so in true faith, and not superstitiously depending on the mere form as the only thing necessary, will not fail to derive comfort and great benefit to his soul thereby,—even the gift of the Holy Ghost. And as Haman was made to clothe Mordecai in royal attire, and himself proclaim before him through all the city, "thus be it done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor;" so were satan himself in the bishop, if it be possible to imagine such a thing, yet in the hands of our God, even he, satan, the great antitype of Haman, shall be made to attire in the royal robes of our Lord's own righteousness "the man whom the king delighteth to honor." Now, although Rusticus has not so openly avowed himself, yet he has shown himself not a whit behind Academicus in conviction, and how so well can we close the Sabbath as with the noble confession that our friends have made? Let us ever praise God our Lord, for all his gracious blessings.

ALL. Amen.

HERMIT. My friends, to-morrow evening I will endeavor to interest you all on the trial of the Spirits, and you, my friend Theophilus, will prepare yourself to defend your Oxford divines in such a trial. May the peace of God be with us!

ALL. Amen.

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FOURTEENTH CONVERSATION.

HERMIT. Perhaps, my friends, the greatest difficulty which occurs to a man, and particularly to men engaged almost incessantly in secular affairs, as in America, perhaps, throughout, but most assuredly in these parts of it,

in the choice of a religious sect to which he will associate himself, is that every man lays claim to be governed by his own judgment, and to show that he is free to choose a religion for himself, he presumes to sit in judgment on the claims to preference in every sect, and he brings all to the standard, not of the bible, but of his own prejudices and feelings, and sets up the idol of his own heart, his own "I THINK" as his standard of truth, and he claims for himself this right, without in the least questioning the same privilege assumed by his neighbor, his wife, and even his own children. This is indeed true liberty of conscience, but it must have a limit somewhere.

It does not seem much unlike the liberty which satan would have established in Heaven, and in which he has too well succeeded in hell and on earth, — the freedom of individual independence, maintained by interminable division and subdivision; whereas the object of the true christian, which he has learnt from our Lord's example and precepts, is union. He is taught that there is one God only, whom no man can find out or know by himself, and naturally he has no desire to know him. But he may be led to this knowledge by education or habits imposed on him by parental or social authority, or he may know this only one God by special revelation, that is, by spiritual conversion, or the gift of the Holy Ghost. There is but one truth, or rather truth is single, and must also be acquired similarly; but naturally man hates the truth. Now the process of attaining to the knowledge of God and the truth by the traditional course of education and habits, or ordinances, imposes a task on every individual, and obliges him to some sort of association and union, and from the restraints of which, his independence, jealous of all restraints, on body or mind, render him naturally averse. But the other way of attaining to all knowledge, to all saving knowledge, all truth, is so flattering to man's self-importance, seems so easy, and is withal so much more complete and perfect, that we cannot wonder all men should be converts to this easy way to heaven; and the devil himself assures them it is all right, and boldly defies all men to prove it wrong; and well he may in these days, when the church has lost her faith, and has relinquished her dominion over evil spirits, with which she always was, and is still endowed, if she dare to assume it. All men now seek spiritual conversion, the supernatural assurance of for-

giveness of sins, and some sensible spiritual operations which shall assure them of some extraordinary influence, which they attribute to the Holy Ghost; they become their own witnesses, tell their own experiences, to some self-erected judges, elders, deacons, or ministers, in some meeting or sect, and there thus acknowledge conversion is sealed by baptism or fellowship in that sect. They become of the elect, and their salvation is sure as that of the Pharisees of old. All these men become fatalists — believe all learned meditation on the scriptures superfluous, and religious education on principles of even their own divinely inspired knowledge to be useless, if not dangerous to youth. For, say they, God himself will call such a one when he pleases, if he be one of the elect, and if not, it will do him no good. Their youth are literally kept quite empty of all religious knowledge or practice, to wait for the call of the Spirit.

This sort of conversion, called regeneration, the new birth, the new creature, is the peculiar feature of methodism; but although not very consistent otherwise, they fall not professedly into the depths of fatalism, like those sects who adopt the denomination and doctrines of Calvin.

Nothing can be of more importance in a religious point of view, than the trial of these Spirits. Our church considers the whole practice as superstitious delusion, or presumptuous enthusiasm or extravagance, and many parties are suspected even of satanic possessions. Bring therefore, my friends, your best and coolest reason and judgment to the trial, and may the Holy Spirit of our God and Lord Jesus Christ enable us rightly to discriminate and to separate the precious from the vile.

For my own part, I will confess that I have on no point of religion felt so much difficulty in coming to a decided judgment as on this, the operations of the Holy Spirit, or of some Spirit, assumed by the parties themselves to be the Holy Ghost; and what man dare hastily hazard his own judgment, that it is not so? the sin against the Holy Ghost, (for which there can be no repentance or pardon) stands in awful array against him, if he should judge that to be an evil spirit, which is the Holy Spirit, or if indeed he should not acknowledge the operations of the Holy Ghost to be the work of the Lord, when manifested with sufficient testimony. How careful should we be not to reject fair testimony of the

presence of the Lord in Spirit, whenever any one presumes or assumes to speak in his name.

It seems to me that herein our church, and every church and sect, has very materially failed; they have assumed, that our Lord has closed the ways of communication between heaven and earth, by the old ways of visions, voice, dreams, angelic messages, &c. &c., and therefore all pretensions to have received direct communications from our Lord by his Holy Ghost, are to be judged and treated as delusions, as the dreams of enthusiasm, or even as satanic possessions; and the ground assumed, for the most part, to justify such conduct, is that the canon of scripture is complete, and therefore there is no occasion for further revelations; therefore, say they, God will give no more.

It is a lamentable fact, that this mode of reasoning is universal, or nearly so, among the persons who affect to be most learned and knowing on religious subjects. But the heart of the natural man revolts against this maxim of human wisdom, and acknowledges in spite of his learned prejudices, or prejudices of learning, that there is an unseen, but not unfelt link of union and communion between the spiritual and the natural world, which may at any time be manifested to the creature. Hence man is naturally prone to superstition, and when not well grounded in religion and the right use of reason, is liable to fall into gross absurdities; hence among the ancients, auguries, visions, dreams, fancies, &c., and among the vulgar, dreams, illusive fancies, visions, stories of ghosts, &c. It is falsely and fatally assumed by the wisdom of the world, that every pretension to divine communication by any of these ways, is superstition, whereas superstition is apt to fancy every dream, and extraordinary human event, and every flight of imagination, to contain divine communications. We have, I believe, said this before, but it is necessary to us now that we are about to try the Spirits. First, I must say a word on the mode of admission to baptism among many of the sects around us. They are made to tell their experiences, and to declare that they have experienced religion before the self-appointed ministers and elders of the sect or meeting; they declare themselves to have been convinced of the sinfulness of their past lives, to have been overwhelmed with sorrow and grief for them, have been in horror and despair, they have prayed, and have felt all joy, peace, gladness, and are thereby assured that God has forgiven them their sins. It is concluded

then, that in such the heart is changed, the new birth has taken place, the Holy Ghost has visited them, they are baptized, taken into fellowship in the sect, and become truly of the elect, who can sin no more.

Another's experience is, that when in utter prostration under conviction of sin, and praying for forgiveness or otherwise, as the case may be, on a sudden, he says, exactly at midnight (or some other solemn hour, but twelve o'clock at night is generally preferred,) a voice assured him "Thy sins are forgiven thee." This, I understand to be the case with those who affect to be pastors and most pious.

These people's worship consists in informal prayer-meetings, at which they tell these experiences, and pray in such form as the Spirit may then dictate; they, for the most part, are ignorant and uneducated; few can read, fewer still write, they do not study scriptures, but learn some common phrases from each other, and quote them freely in defence of their peculiarities, and I am assured that scarcely one among them but can harangue and pray by the Spirit, in a most extraordinary way, and make very long prayers too. The Lord's prayer is not however given them, (they say,) and they affect only to repeat words given by the Spirit, and who shall presume hastily to decide, that this is not the Holy Spirit? They baptize adults by immersion, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and many of them lead lives blameless, according to a scale of morals they have marked out for themselves; and many fall away again into folly and wickedness; they keep no Sabbaths, attach themselves to no church in particular, and generally are peculiarly idle and negligent of social duties. The spiritual exercises of telling experiences and praying in the Spirit, is their only mode of religious worship. How, my friends, shall we try these Spirits? are they good, or are they evil?

**THEOPHILUS.** In the course of our conclusions from former conversations, we seem to have arrived at the following, which may as well be laid aside, as determined by our judgment at least.

1st. The Holy Spirit's influence is not acknowledged by the church of Rome as the governing principle. The power of the Holy Ghost has, in that church, been usurped by the Pope, because no interpretation of scripture is permitted to be received as a rule of faith, or as a guide of conduct by any papist, but such as is approved by the Pope, because the Pope being a fallible mortal

man, assumes himself to be infallible, which is proved not to be true by all history and experience, and because he assumes himself to be the spiritual head of the universal church, which is direct treason against our Lord, because he presumes also to invade the powers and authority of our Lord, by judging the quick and the dead, and by himself and ministers, awarding rewards, pains, punishments, &c., both in time and in eternity, either by his own arbitrary will, caprice, or worldly interest. He has put the kingdom of heaven to sale, and of that salvation which our Lord has proclaimed without money and without price, he makes a source of revenue. And lastly, the Trentine confession of faith, is a seal of the apostacy of the Roman church, which leaves it without visible hopes of recovery. We may therefore presume that no works of the papists, of any papist, as papists, are of the Holy Spirit, except as he may please to exert his power in overruling providence, as he does amongst Pagans and Mahometans. We may then decide directly, that no papist can have the Spirit of our Lord, because the papacy is anti-christian decidedly, whether the Pope be the anti-christ or no.

2nd. The Holy Spirit may be manifested in the Greek church, in many of its branches, I believe, because although they have many superstitions and absurdities, yet they are not avowedly anti-christian; they may have trespassed on, but I do not know that they have invaded our Lord's authority, by the open usurpation of his powers. Their priesthood however are not ordained by the express and visible authority of our Lord, therefore the Holy Spirit's extraordinary gifts may not there be sought. The ordinary gifts of grace, so far as human endowments, they may have, but I think we decided that they have no superhuman gifts beyond those which are common to all christians — notwithstanding they have the apostolical succession perfect as a fleshly ordinance.

3d. And they may have the Holy Spirit as manifested by what is called grace, the ordinary works of grace, as distinguished from the super-human, of which we may recollect some particular definitions, as where (God,) Almighty Power, says to Moses, "I AM the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." "I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," (and did then appear to Moses,) "by my name" (God) "Almighty Power, did I make myself known to them, but by name Jehovah, I AM the eter-



nal, did I not then declare myself." These appearances were supernatural and unusual. But he certainly was as much the God of their children as of them ; but these their children, had no knowledge, or it may be said, no personal acquaintance with him, as their fathers had ; but for more than two hundred years in Egypt, were left to the traditions of their fathers, and the ordinary grace of the Holy Spirit, Almighty Power, (or God) was however then about to appear to, and dwell among their children visibly, and then revealed himself by the name Jehovah, Yeowa, Yow, Yah, Io, and his visible presence did actually dwell, or rest among them about nine hundred years, and in that time could always have been appealed to, as to a living oracle, and was so, not only immediately but mediately, by solemn and formal appeal, as David through Abiathar, or when clad in the ephod, and for these purposes, and the practice of Daniel, we may infer that they were used then to look towards his visible dwelling-place, as the Jews do now, I believe, look towards Jerusalem. I have been perhaps a little prosy on the subject of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, because since our conversations commenced the peculiar turn of our host's observations, have led me to view the subject in quite a new light. In short, I had never examined the subject critically. But it is quite clear on reflection, that the grace of God had not at any time deserted any part of the world, nor any nation or tribe of men. Something that might be called religion or virtue, might be distinguished among all ; but God Almighty was pleased to dwell, visibly, and to render himself sensibly approachable at Jerusalem. So among every class of christians, there exists some religion, for which men have set up a standard of their own invention, or of their own peculiar mode of interpreting scripture, by which to measure religion and morals. These works of grace, as they are called in others, can have no infallible standard as to their divine origin in us, nor any proof of his special indwelling in us, available to others. But the gifts of the Holy Ghost spoken of in the New, and indeed in the Old Testaments, were evident and notorious to others besides the gifted persons, and the promise is, Mark xvi, 17, that it shall be so, and I think, Mr. Hermit, I so understand you ; you question not that the grace spoken of sometimes, is a gift of the Holy Ghost, as in the history of our Lord, it is written, "He grew in favor with God and man," that is, in the gifts of divine grace ; but sure-

ly this was very different from the gifts of the Holy Ghost which descended on our Lord at his baptism by John, in Jordan.

Of the occult gifts of the Holy Ghost, which persons may assume their right to infer as existing in themselves ; of these, I say, others than themselves can have no proof, no testimony : for example, that he, the Holy Ghost, has authorized any man to say that he has been chosen by him (the Holy Ghost) to declare that he has his express authority or call to an office in the ministry of the gospel. Of this, Mr. Hermit has proved to us incontestibly, no sure testimony can be given to others than the person who says he has the witness in himself. I cannot know whether he may not tell an untruth, or whether he may not be under a delusion. A man's own convictions may serve as sufficient testimony to assure himself, and for his own guidance ; but when he assumes this holy authority to give his teaching and guidance to others, as based on authority he has derived from the Holy Almighty Spirit, the persons to whom he is sent must have some external and sensible assurance of his holy mission. And herein I think the ministry of all sects at present in christendom have failed, and do continue to fail, to authenticate their divine commission ; and when they pretend to the discernment of spirits, by the mere relation of the experiences, as infallible judges, this I must think is presumption, amounting to usurpation of the authority of our Lord. Nor can they justify their systems by any thing like consistency.

The ordinary works of grace by the occult influence of the Holy Ghost may exist in all people, and must be assumed for all christians who have sought the Holy Ghost, as directed by the ordinances of our Lord and his apostles. But all those gifts which are claimed as extraordinary, their truth cannot be established without ordinary and sensible testimony. I must say that I am quite decided that none of those pretensions to a peculiar personal visitation by the Holy Ghost, which men lay claim to by telling their common experiences before men fallible as themselves,—none of them can be depended on ; they lead to many fatal delusions ; generally result in much error, and not unfrequently in much wickedness.

3d. I have endeavored, Mr. Hermit, to divest myself of orthodox prejudice, and to be as liberal as I can ; but in sober truth, I cannot see on what ground any man, or any set of men, can presume to introduce members into

the church of Christ our Lord, without a special call to do so that shall be manifested sensibly, at least to the persons' satisfaction who are the parties to be initiated, and also to the satisfaction of that church into which the newly initiated are to be received. For example to illustrate the case, let us follow up the analogy of Freemasons. In that society there are certain officers, by a fleshly ordinance and succession, very similar to the initiatory rites of christianity, and none but those who are regularly ordained to the office by the leaders of the lodge, who have been chosen in succession from times beyond record, even to the early kings of Jerusalem, at any rate, the knowledge of the first founders is lost in the darkness of remote ages; yet no body in masons' lodges, viz., no Freemasons doubt their authority so derived, which is complete analogy of apostolic succession. Nor would any member of any lodge whatever, presume to initiate a person into the mysteries until authorized to do so by their lodge, through their head master present. They rise in their society or lodge through similar ordinances, all appointed by the lodge, through its presiding chief, and learn in a manner regularly subordinated to ordinances, rites and ceremonies, all the mysteries of their craft, which when obtained, give them access to any and all the lodges in the world; and thus Freemasonry, like christianity, is one body only.

This, Mr. Hermit, I have understood to be the constitution of Freemasonry, and so perfect an analogy is it of the christian church, that I am surprised no use has been made of the striking similitude. If any member, or members of any lodge should presume to set up any other lodge, similarly or otherwise constituted, and to desecrate its mysteries without a commission or permission so to do from a lodge already constituted according to ancient usage, he or they would lie under a ban, and their proceedings and irregularly constituted body would not be acknowledged. Herein, also, is a striking resemblance of the church. No christian church can be formed but in one of two ways. 1st, Either as a branch or daughter of some church already regularly constituted and maintained in continuity of existence, without interruption or lapse, or 2d, By direct authority from our Lord, superhumanly authenticated, for he is the head of the church, and the head master mason.

Churches so regularly continued in and maintaining their succession, have a right to claim the miraculous

gifts and power of the Holy Ghost, because these are promised, Mark xvi. 17.

I do by no means affirm that the gifts of the Holy Ghost may not be given to some extent to any individual whom our Lord may choose, either in or out of any church regularly or irregularly constituted. But I know of no promises to this effect except Joel ii., and in Isaiah xv — when “the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth, as the waters cover the sea.”

I have, however, Mr. Hermit, no hesitation in declaring my conviction, that the experiences and proceedings in the mock ordination of men to ministerial offices in the church of our Lord, and in the initiation of members into his body, is irregular, schismatic, subversive of all unity, therefore antichristian, and not of the Holy Ghost in the general instances which you have adduced.

HERMIT. Many thanks to you, my good Theophilus. I renounce all claim to compliment on bringing you round to sound, sober sense. You have reasoned yourself into a right view of the standing of the church, and seeing her errors, may be better prepared whenever it may please the Holy Spirit to employ you in its ministry, as I doubt not he will, to amend in some measure its faults. But both the failings and virtues of the church of England deserve and shall have some farther notice when we shall have dismissed the pretenders whom we have now on hand

Presuming to no special gifts of that Holy Spirit of our Lord which should enable me to pronounce decidedly on the nature of the spirit which these people invoke, leaving their hearts and occult experiences in his hands who alone can know them, I venture not to pronounce that the Holy Spirit has or has not poured out on them, from his fulness, some limited gifts. But “by their works ye shall know them.” By these we are directed to judge them. We see, then, that these people pretend to offer no other external proof of the gifts of the spirit, beyond their professions and their good works; that they follow the commandments of the Lord in their worldly conduct according to their methods of interpretation of the New Testament, affecting to have nothing to do with the Old. I observe one grand object with them is to vituperate the church, that is, the episcopal church, and other sects; that they neither study the scriptures, keep the Sabbath, nor many other ordinances. I fear, therefore, they are not moved by the Holy Spirit, whose object is union, not division.

That some of them do amend their lives even to a tolerable moral standard, must be confessed ; and in so far, may be subject to a holy spiritual influence ; but no man can know their hearts : and still they fall very short, and worldly objects may be fairly assumed for some of their best works. They show even in these no signs of special spiritual gifts, beyond numerous examples even in the episcopal church, of which men cannot judge. I do not. There is nothing in them that commands my obedience, or even my subservience to them. There is nothing in them which may not be, and which has not been assumed by wicked men ; these therefore, that they assume on certain experiences within themselves only, are no special signs by which the presence of the Holy Spirit can be assumed in those persons, authorizing other persons to believe them to be the special gifts of the Holy Ghost.

But in their prayer meetings it is said they are manifestly moved by a spirit above their ordinary spirit. They make long orations called prayer — some I am told which may be fairly adopted as the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Be it so. I know not enough of them to enable me to judge, but unaccompanied by any other external testimony, and being irregular, I am at liberty to reject even this as insufficient to convince me that I should defer to such teaching. So far as my present experience goes, I cannot admit that they give evidence that they are chosen by our Lord as teachers of his word, of which indeed as it is written, they are generally very ignorant.

Indeed I must say, that failing to produce a spirit of scriptural inquiry, failing to produce obedience to the word of scriptures, I fear their very best prayers, (but I have not heard them.) failing to use that form of prayer taught by our Lord himself, failing I say in all these marks of a holy spirit, I fear the spirit which prompts their orations, may be another spirit than the Holy Ghost ; and any other is evil. But they must stand or fall to their own master. I doubt both their sanctity and their truth. I try without success to persuade myself that some may be moved and taught by the Holy Ghost, but they avoid the sacraments ; therefore my reason and all revelation justifies suspicion that they are not subject to the Holy Spirit. I cannot receive them as teachers, and for themselves I must leave them to be judged by the Lord.

I have said (on report) that the spirit which in them prompts and dictates prayer, seems to me to be an enmity to the holy scriptures, which we know are revelations

from the spiritual world, from almighty power, from God Almighty, from our Lord himself. What then shall we say? Shall we hesitate to pronounce that in so far as the teaching of this spirit, whose manifestations are so commonly exhibited by these recited experiences, is contrary, adverse and inimical to the teaching of the Holy Ghost in the written scriptures, it is antichristian, it is evil, it is Satanic? But these people deny stoutly that they are so. But do they not subject the works of this spirit to man, to fallible man, to each other, to their self-called, self-elected teachers for judgment—is not division of the members of these little bodies perpetuated by this spirit? And we have shown that Satan is the author of disunion and division of man from man, and from his Maker. This is the result of this spirit's work most assuredly; therefore it is most assuredly Satanic. But we must not venture too far in judgment of each other, but look at home, take the beam out of our own eye, before we venture to remove the mote from our brother's eye. Let us endeavor to render ourselves, with the aid of God's grace, perfect as he would have us. Let us by intercommunion with each other, impart of the good grace we have received, and thus render our experiences useful to each other, and endeavor to graft all separate members into the parent stock again, even into Christ our Lord and our God.

On this subject of the trial of the spirits, the Irvingites, who had sometimes supernatural voices among them of a very extraordinary nature, sought from scripture a compendious form or mode of conducting such trial. There is in my library an excellent account of their rise and progress in Richard Baxter's narrative, and the direction from John's epistle was adopted to this effect, that no man can say or declare (his conviction, belief, or faith,) that Jesus Christ is the Lord, and has been manifested in human flesh, but by the Spirit of the Lord, therefore, whenever any person, not known to their church as being a prophet, or so used to speak by inspiration of the Holy Spirit they were used to try them by this test—Is Jesus Christ come in the flesh? But this test was found to be insufficient to preserve them from delusion, of which an account may be seen in the said narrative of Richard Baxter, in the case of Miss H. who acknowledged that she had *once* done so, that is, she had once spoken *not* by the Holy Spirit or power; this once was quite enough to break up all faith in her communications, so long as

not supported by other, and incontrovertible testimony. Baxter himself, had certain supernatural powers of utterance, in tongues and wonderful showings forth of the scriptures, by spiritual aid or suggestions, which had all the signs of being the gifts of the Holy Ghost; but he had not the faith of Abraham, he doubted that satan had been the author of some of these suggestions and gifts of utterance, and so he fell; and he fell because he affected to reconcile those promptings of the Spirit to his own spirit, and fancied that the Spirit which spoke in him, had deceived him; herein was his faithlessness manifest, and we learn thereby to receive the communications of the Spirit through other fallible channels or persons with great caution; and great caution too, must be used in rejecting any extraordinary Spirit which may visit us, lest we should thereby be rejecting an angel of the Lord; and as much caution is required, or even more, in rejecting the testimony of extraordinary Spirits in others; in ourselves our own spirit furnishes sufficient testimony for our own conviction, but more is required to fix my faith in the extraordinary spiritual manifestations in other persons. As to the Irvingites, I can of myself be no judge, but the world has judged that the testimony offered, that these gifts were of the Holy Ghost, was insufficient, and certainly I never had testimony enough to satisfy me. The great object of these spiritual and extraordinary gifts in the church of Irving, was the proclamation of the near approach of the second coming of our Lord in the power and majesty of the Almighty Eternal in the glorified person of Jesus Christ, to consummate the redemption of the world, and to establish his reign, in person, over all the earth. Believing this fact, I declare myself to feel so much interest in that glorious event, as promised, as to be ever ready and eager to receive any news or communications from our Lord's spiritual kingdom on the subject, therefore, although I have not had (and perhaps, because I have not sought) sufficient testimony to prove to me incontestibly, the truth of those late revelations, yet I do not discredit them.

I would however offer a few words on the test that sect, if sect it can be called, adopted to try the Spirits. That confession of faith prescribed by John to be exacted from persons speaking in the Spirit, that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh," is, in some measure, as to its sense or meaning, obscure or ambiguous; for the Unitarian who disbelieves the divinity and omnipotency of

Jesus Christ, may say this, nay the very devils acknowledged this, and more, that He was the Holy One, the Son of God. This declaration then, as a spiritual test, seems to me, not to go far enough to secure us against the wiles or methodisms of the devil. Ephes. vi. 2.

But a declaration may be framed to embrace what I understand to be the full meaning of that in Saint John's epistle, which would leave us little room to doubt of the nature of the Spirit speaking in any one. "Dost thou declare, O Spirit! that thou speakest to us in the name and power of Jesus Christ, who being the only begotten Son of the Almighty Father, that made the heavens and the earth, and all things spiritual and material; that the same Jesus being in the form and flesh of a man, the same Almighty Father dwelt in him, and was openly manifested to men in human flesh by works of Almighty power, who being one with Almighty power, or God Almighty, the same God, the Father is to be forever worshipped and glorified in the God-man Jesus Christ, art thou that Holy Spirit of the Father and the Son, whom our Lord Jesus Christ promised to send to instruct us in all truth?" Or in shorter terms, a christian may lawfully question a Spirit thus: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God over all blessed forever, I charge thee to tell us whether thou speakest to us in His most holy name, and by his authority?" And where sufficient testimony is not given to command the full faith of a christian, he may be exorcised thus: "If thou be an evil spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ, Lord of all the works of God Almighty, to come out of him!" If the exorcist be a christian with faith as a grain of mustard seed, no evil spirit can withstand the power which is given to and by this great name, or else our New Testament is a dead-letter.

Without attempting to carry our inquiries into antiquity, I shall take this occasion to speak of some later gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit, in which multitudes had perfect belief, and which greater multitudes fancy to be delusions of satan or impostures.

About the year 1792, supposed the termination of the great prophetic period of 1260 years, one Richard Brothers announced himself commissioned by the Lord to preach a warning to that generation, in the spirit of the old prophet Jonah. His predictions, mostly of a political nature, which were the signs of his prophetic mission,



were remarkably fulfilled, particularly in the events which accompanied and followed the French revolution. His warnings were addressed to the king and privy council. He was sent with a message to parliament, but all his messages were unheeded. The burden of his prophetic warning was, to continue looking for the Lord's promised second coming in judgment and glory; not to intermeddle with the French revolution, which, if we did, it would bring great troubles on England, a nation greatly favored by God Almighty. Revolutionary parties were strong in the nation at that day, and Richard Brothers was suspected of being the creature of some such party; he was examined before the council, and found blameless. He was a lieutenant in the navy, and being then quite sane, he was confined in a mad-house, and his half-pay stopped to defray his expenses; he became discontented, impatient, mad, blasphemous, and at length, when really mad, was liberated, fell under a sad delusion, believed and announced himself to be the Shiloh, the Messiah, the deliverer of the Jews, and died, I believe, an infatuated fanatic, under gross delusion. The world has concluded from the termination of his career, that he was a false prophet, a madman, and impostor; but can we so conclude? There was one remarkable fact predicted by him, as seen by himself in vision, the assassination of the king of Sweden by Ankerstroom. The event verified the prophetic character of his vision, which was published, I believe, before the fact. Whilst myself reading the account given by Elias Carpenter of Richard Brothers, where this is mentioned, an account was put into my hand of a most remarkable visionary scene enacted more than one hundred years before the event, in Sweden itself, where the whole scene of the assassination and execution of the assassin was enacted in the waking presence of Gustavus and three of his principal ministers, and left on record, attested by the king himself.

What shall we say to these two visions, more than a hundred years apart, in two such different places, and by such different men? Both visions were verified by the fact. The truth therefore of Brother's mission from our Lord cannot be doubted, and perhaps the final infatuation, absurdity, and delusion, of this man was permitted by the Lord to harden the hearts of an unbelieving nation. I have never seen all the works of Brothers, but believe the burden to be to turn this British nation

to the Lord by repentance, &c., and to expect the fulfilment of the promised advent which is to precede the glorious millennium, to both of which our church and state were then deaf.

Much as I am disposed by all the prejudices of early habit and education, to see no blemish in our church, and which is in truth (so far as I am able to judge) the most free from the shackles of superstition, priestly tyranny, and spiritual despotism, of any church or sect on earth, yet some of her failings are too notorious, and threaten to overwhelm us in Laodicean lukewarmness. Her most attached children cannot be blind to these. Her errors, however, are for the most part of omission. Errors of commission she has perhaps few, and those few are legacies from her Roman mother. Whether Brothers addressed himself to the church at all, I know not, but it is probable he did so specifically. The church's duty should be to seek out the persons who have special spiritual gifts, and all who come, or say only they come, on our Lord's business, or with communications from or about him; nay she should be as anxious to do so as a fond wife to receive news from her absent husband, for whose return she only hopes as the consummation of earthly bliss. But alas! if our Lord were to return to his spouse (the church) tomorrow, has she even a chamber to receive him in? I must guard myself against breaking out into rhapsody, for the subject would be lamentation and wo. To do the subject justice, I should be obliged to view the church as seduced into spiritual harlotry and adultery with the enemy of our Lord, his murderer, even Satan. Therefore I say she would have no chamber to welcome her Lord in, much less would his embraces be welcome, polluted as she is by Satanic intercourse. But enough of this here. Our next prophet has abundance to the purpose. We have decided that the ministry as a body, and almost to every individual in all the sects and churches, are appointed to their offices by Satanic influence. Therefore it is not to be wondered at, that there should appear more than indifference to any subject which might lead to more vital religion, or a reformation of evils that all must see, and too many be in the enjoyment of its fruits. This will account for the spiritual enmity evinced by the church as a body, to all who either did or fancied they did enjoy some special gifts of the Holy Spirit, for she herself has long ceased to claim any such. And why? Her paramour must

turn out of doors whenever her true Lord shall return to possess his own. I am a little figurative here, but you, Theophilus, I am sure will quite understand me, and my reflections on this head are principally intended as suggestions for you to enlarge upon. The conclusion is this: the church, the episcopal church of England, is not merely indifferent to spiritual endowments and spiritually gifted persons, but is inimical to them, and watches with an eye of the keenest jealousy, every slip they make, and to which as mortals and sinful men they must, although prophets, although gifted, still be prone.

The generation which our Lord visited in humility, spoke evil of him; how much more will these do so of his messengers, who are but sinful men? An open manifestation of spiritual gifts, is branded by the worldly-wise as a presumptuous affectation of extraordinary piety, and found, as all men must be, fallible. They are denounced as hypocrites for this manifestation of Satanic envy and jealousy. (I must think it is so, if it be lawful to attribute motives to God Almighty.) Our Lord is pleased to permit this generation to harden themselves in their unbelief, by using the most fallible and humble of his creatures as the instruments of his communications. But I must cease from these reflections.

RUSTICUS. Indeed, Hermit, I like these reflections of yours much better than drier stuff; and all episcopalian, as you call yourself, I think that you must admit that our kirk, if it be bad, is not quite so bad as your church, as to Satanic influence on its ministry.

HERMIT. Indeed, Rusticus, mother Kirk has nothing to boast of over her elder sister church. She is a much less comely person, therefore Satan has not taken such a fancy to her, and subjects her to less temptation. And in truth there is an old remark I have somewhere heard, that he has Kirk safe enough at his will, on the side of her doctrines of fatal decrees, rank fatalism; both Calvinists and Mahommedans are said to be safely hooked; therefore the wicked one has no need to tempt them with other bait. They appear to travel on more smoothly, because they cannot get loose. Satan (some say) can bag them when he will. I have heard the same said of Socinians, too.

ACADEMICUS. I hope, my friend Rusticus, you are satisfied about mother Kirk. I fancy you will not be in a hurry to make many more comparisons in compliment of that homely lady. I am desirous to hear more of the

modern prophets, and hope you will continue your account of them. The subject of spiritual gifts, and how to try them, is to me very interesting, Mr. Hermit. I think you made some mention of the signs of a prophet. What are we to understand these to be? for I should think, if there were any sure and certain signs by which they may be known, the authenticity of their communications could not then be doubted.

HERMIT. I have before, in the course of our conversations, made a few rather desultory observations on them, and the inquiry is perhaps quite in place here. To be answered more fully. I shall therefore endeavor to do so as briefly as I can.

Moses, in Deuteronomy xiii, instructs the Israelites how to try the prophets. I will quote from memory as best I can. "If a prophet shall come to you," (in my name,) "and he foretell some future event, if that which he shall foretell do come to pass, then I have sent that prophet. But if a prophet shall foretell any future event which shall come to pass as he has predicted, yet if that prophet should teach you to follow any other Gods than me, who have manifested myself to you, let him be put to death, fear him not." When a prophet was sent with a message, it seems to have been usual to give him some sign by which he was to satisfy the people to whom he was sent, that he was commissioned by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Moses gave a sign to the Koraites. He directed them to take fire in their censers, and burn incense to the Lord. Now incense symbolized the prayers of and for the whole congregation, which were to be offered up by the high priest only, and after special preparation, which it was death for any other to imitate or to do; (by the by, this applies particularly to extempore and liturgical prayers in the public worship of the church, and is an unanswerable reason why a liturgical form is more acceptable to the Lord;) and he, Moses, told the Koraites, if the Lord accepted their offerings, their unhallowed prayers or incense, then they would know of a surety that the Lord Jehovah had not sent him. You know the result; they sought a special sign to satisfy their ambition and self-righteousness. Too much like modern puritanical sectarists, the sign appointed was fatal to them.

The signs that Moses received, first to assure himself of the almighty power of Him (Jehovah) who sent him, (Moses) the changing his rod to a living serpent, and

again the serpent to the rod ; the making his hand leprous and again restoring it. In this you see how careful even Moses was to assure himself, or rather to receive full assurance of the power of that spirit who spake to him. It was evidently supernatural, but it might not be the spirit of almighty power. Of this he would be assured before he undertook to execute the Lord's commission, and you remember by what signs he authenticated this commission to Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The fastidiousness of Moses in trying the spirit who spake to him, is a lesson of caution to all christians, not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits and the gracious condescension of our Lord to the slow apprehension of his creatures throughout is quite marvellous and encouraging.

The signs were various, and adapted to circumstances. Sometimes they were things that had passed, which none but the Father of all spirits could know, such as that of Nathan to David, that of Isaiah to Hezekiah in answer to his secret prayers, those continued signs to Isaiah when sent to Ahaz, and those to Ahaz, and future generations, so well explained by Irving in the morning watch, and we see why signs were always inquired for by the Jews. It is needless, I presume, to say more on the subject now, but to apply what has been said to R. Brothers. Numerous were the signs in the way of predictions that accompanied his earliest communications, and had the church, as was its duty, examined all his signs and messages, they would have found them satisfactory; for even I who think myself sufficiently disposed to incredulity, am satisfied. But when Jonah-like, he became angry, he fell, and although he still evidently was under the influence of a supernatural spirit, yet no more sure signs were given, he fancied himself the Shiloh promised to the Jews. This was to be their God manifest in the flesh, the Messiah which this man fancied himself to be. This was in fact preaching another God, and that God in himself. And God was pleased to permit this, perhaps because of the incredulity and negligence to seek rational conviction.

I am now, Academicus, about to enter on the history of another prophet, of a totally distinct character from any that have preceded her. In the same year, 1792, Johanna Southcott appeared in England. She bore testimony to R. Brothers, and against his later blasphemies. As her writings, which contain a full account of herself, and those of Elias Carpenter, her friend, witness and

opponent, will be found in my library, it will not be necessary to relate much about her. You may by them judge for yourselves, and pass whatever sentence on her spirit that the spirit in you may dictate; in short her case is as follows:

Johanna, whom Elias Carpenter calls Noadiah in some of his writings concerning her, was born about 1751, in a village in Devonshire. She was a poor farmer's daughter, scarcely instructed in the art of reading; she was a servant, and frequently hired out by the day, or week, or job, for her subsistence. She could neither write nor spell her own language, but she could make marks very coarsely indeed, of which I have one specimen of her own writing, by which you may, if you please, be satisfied that she had no advantages of educated instruction. She could read the bible, however, and, it seems, attached herself to it much. About 1788 or 1789, it would seem she had some spiritual visitations, that is, a Spirit distinct from her own body and soul, which became, as it were, the internal tenant of her person, and could, and did communicate with her as distinctly, or even more so, than a more external companion could do. Her first intimate acquaintance with this Spirit greatly alarmed her, I believe, but when more habituated to commune with it, she was led by it, and became a prophetess. Under the Spirit's direction she appealed to the clergyman of the parish, according to the rules of the church, of which this man was chosen by the spirit as a fair sample of the whole body. She was told, but rather obscurely, by the spirit, that he in the end would betray her; his name was Pomeroy. She published, still under the spirit's guidance, some of her early prophecies, in which Mr. Pomeroy's name was mentioned. He had no objections to know and advise her so long as he could do so only behind the curtain; but when he was yoked in print with an obscure, ignorant and illiterate personage, a visionary enthusiast, a pretender to have manifest gifts of the Holy Ghost, he was joined with his prophetess to be the butt of sarcasm, sneer, derision and contempt of all the hierarchy; he had not the moral courage to withstand the raillery of the hierarchy, and he did betray her. He destroyed the prophecies of two or three years, which he held in trust for her, although the signs which he had himself required, were really given to him.

His intention by this breach of faith was, to prevent his name from appearing as the abettor of a low person,

who had been subject to much vituperation and foolish sarcasm from the ministry of every sect, and to the utter contempt of the hierarchy of the established church; but the woman, aided or led by her familiar spirit, to whose guidance she was implicitly obedient, exposed him to the utter contempt of all good men; for she published, I believe, upwards of eighty considerable pamphlets, and in, I think, the greater number of them, Mr. Pomeroy's name and treason were prominent features; thus producing the very consequence he deprecated and tried to avoid.

Johanna, as a prophetess, led by the spirit, fulfilled all righteousness. She addressed the bishops and three thousand of the clergy, by letters personally addressed to them; she addressed the clergy of the church as a body, and offered to submit her writings and the whole detail of the spirit's operations in her, to any twenty-four ministers of the church, who would undertake to examine the whole evidence by which she believed the communications to be from our Lord God himself, if they would examine them dispassionately and seriatim. She would abide by their decision, and if they should declare her communications to have been from an evil or deluding spirit, or not from the Almighty God himself, she would abide by their judgment, even to the destruction of whatever she had written, and future silence.

What more could any real prophet do to convince men really willing to be convinced? Our Lord, we know, could have forced them into a proper line of conduct, but he will have no pressed men, none but volunteers. These men would not be persuaded.

There is one peculiar feature in these new revelations not only to Johanna, but to many of, perhaps *all* the other prophets who have at various times risen in England, (and of whose histories I am too ignorant,) that I will speak of whilst I think of it, and will be very comfortable to Theophilus. That their exhortations, warnings and threatenings are generally addressed to the church Episcopal of England, which is a clear proof of our Lord's interest in that church.

Johanna and some others were inclined to the Methodists, but for public worship were directed to the forms and liturgy of the Church of England, not in absolute bondage to a mere formalism, but that a liturgical form on that model was agreeable to the Lord. Moreover, in all her works, and particularly in her bible readings, Ro-

manism, Calvinism, Arianism, or modern Unitarianism and Methodism have their peculiarities subject to examination and reproof, even by the Holy Spirit of our Lord himself. I do not recollect a single allusion to any error in the doctrines or form of government in our church, but much, very much on the apathy and negligence of the ministry, and criminal apostacy of some, whom, to awaken to repentance and a sense of duty, seems to have been one great object of our Lord in these special revelations.

The grand object of all, however, appears to have been the proclamation of the near approach of the second advent of our Lord, and in Johanna's person and history to set forth by living drama a shadow of the history and errors of the church. She is reminded continually that she is not the substance, but offered to the world as a shadow.

Her bible readings, her parables, and some other productions, are really beautiful, but being conveyed in homely and ungrammatical dialect, and, moreover, in what may be termed in doggrel rhyme, drew on her the sarcasms of the worldly, wise and learned. One parson was hardy enough to say that he had no notion of a Holy Ghost that could not write grammar; and by many of the clergy she was designated by most cruel names.

About 1801 or 1802, three clergymen of the church acknowledged her mission to be divine, and many pious, good persons attached themselves to her cause, proved and authenticated her writings by formal trial at two several times, 1803 and 1804. So far, therefore, her productions are unquestionable, and her history well authenticated.

She lived ten years after, and died in December, 1814, under a most awful trial, and which, as I believe, all men judge to be a gross delusion. Nevertheless, of her numerous followers there are many who believe that her end is a great mystery, still to be developed by God's grace and providence, and perhaps many expect her return again before the great day of the Lord, upon what grounds, I know not. Mr. Elias Carpenter who was her friend, and priest, and opponent, from 1805 until her death, says she was set forth as a shadow of the Roman Church, as he himself was of the Protestant Church; and, therefore, it was in the Lord's purpose to exhibit in the history of these shadows, the good and the evil existing in those churches, and I should much like to see



an able analysis of both these. I certainly did myself much mistake her character. I was in London when she died, under the apparent delusion that she was not the shadow, but the real woman spoken of in Revelation xii., and the awful circumstances of her death, whilst expecting to produce a son, the Shiloh, the holy child who was to rule the world, led me, with all men of that day, to conclude that she was an enthusiastic impostor. I think differently now. It is to be expected that there is much in the circumstances she was caused, or permitted by the Lord to enact, which cannot now be understood in her prophetic character, inconsistent as it is with the ignorance so manifest in herself. Why the Lord permitted her to fall under this gross and fearful delusion, unless it were as Carpenter supposes, to complete the picture she was made to represent, as the likeness of an apostate church, which has abused his gifts and endowments really in substance, as much and as grossly as in her, the shadow, they seemed to be abused; this mystery is yet to be solved.

ACADEMICUS. Really, Mr. Hermit, I was somewhat alarmed for your judgment when you took up the case of Johanna. I have never heard her name mentioned but as the very acme of imposture and enthusiasm. As you have developed her character in the very compendious way you have, I am become so much interested in her history, that I shall read her works certainly, under the impression you have given, that she is the picture of Pope Joan, and her true representative, even under the same name. Your time is past, good host, we must not trespass on your hours.

HERMIT. God bless us all, my friends: good night.

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FIFTEENTH CONVERSATION.

*Theophilus, Rusticus, Academicus and Freeborn, met before the log fire, after the usual round of worship and prayer.*

*Hermit not being present after the conclusion of the services, being called off to a neighbor on some business.*

ACADEMICUS. Mr. Freeborn, we are all infinitely indebted to you for your introduction to our host, Mr. Hermit, whom we have found to be a man of much sound knowledge, particularly on matters of religion; but

what seems to us very unaccountable, that although he reads the service for the benefit of his neighbors, regularly, and has chosen excellent discourses from most pious men for you, yet he seems to have little influence, and to be but lightly esteemed in this particular. We think we have never met so much experience and sound faith in any man.

FREEBORN. Why, you see gentlemen, we are used to judge for ourselves in matters of this sort, and although we are all obliged to say that Hermit is a good old man enough, and is very learned, for the ministers who visit us occasionally, who have conversed with him, all say he knows the bible well, yet we have a few things against him. He always uses a book to read from and pray by. Our people who are called to the ministry use none. The prayers he uses may be very good, but our people seem never to feel them; and it is a question whether many of them understand what they are praying for, and to whom, when in church. He has taken great pains to persuade all the people and their children to be sprinkled, which we generally think can do them no good; and many wicked people have been so christened. And he tries to persuade them they should never stay away from the sacrament, whereas we do not think ourselves good enough to meddle with such holy things. Our people tell all their experiences in our meetings. We bewail our sins; all take a part, speak, and pray, and beseech the meeting to pray for us. We feel our religion so deeply, that it is not uncommon with good and earnest preachers, to see him, and all, men, women and children, have their hearts so touched as to break forth in extacies, both of joy and grief, so as to cause our lamentations and rejoicings to be heard afar off; screaming, crying, laughing, and some even yelling. This is indeed experiencing religion; it is feeling it. We see nothing of all this in Hermit's meetings. It is true he never lets an opportunity slip him to give us lectures on religion whenever we call on him on business, or he on us; but then he tells us he is no parson, no minister, and is no more than one of us; so for the most part our people don't mind what he says. We all see, however, and own, that our people are neither so wild or wicked as they used to be before he settled among us.

As for his acquaintance, you see he has often invited me to spend an evening or two with him. But his hours don't suit me at all. I must do my work and be up

early, which I could not do if I sat up all night; but now, in these christmas times, I don't mind, and so I am come over this evening to see how you make it out with neighbor, and to have a little conversation.

THEOPHILUS. But if Hermit himself is no parson, Mr. Freeborn, parsons of the church no doubt come here occasionally to do that which Hermit, not being a parson, cannot do; that is, administer the sacraments. And as for preaching, the truth is the truth, come from whom it will. Pray, Mr. Freeborn, do your people believe that the extatic feeling you speak of in their experiences, is the Holy Spirit in them?

FREEBORN. Yes, certainly. Who else could tell them their sins were forgiven? Who else could teach them to pray? And some of our people, young and old, who had never been able to open their mouths in prayer, would surprise you; and such words are given to them as beat the parson's all hollow. And who else could tell when to be immersed? When once we have been dipped, then our election is sure, for we don't hold to works, or to the Old Testament at all. There we think Hermit wrong again, and all the parsons of the church; they stick to works. Why, when your election is sure, and your name written in the book of life, and your sins forgiven, what is the use of works?

THEOPHILUS. Pray, Freeborn, do your people imagine all the sins they may commit after their election are forgiven them at the time they feel the spirit tell them their sins are forgiven?

FREEBORN. Oh no! but better still, after our election we can commit no sin.

RUSTICUS. I do not wonder, Mr. Freeborn, that your people prefer your religion to Hermit's, for certainly, it seems to me to be the most comfortable religion I have heard of, except the Turk's; there appears to be only one objection to it, viz: there is not a word of reason or truth in it.

HERMIT. [The Hermit joins the party and addresses Freeborn.] I am very glad indeed, neighbor, to see you. What am I indebted to for this treat?

FREEBORN. Why, curiosity as much as any thing else. Your friends have been here a fortnight, and except a little hunting excursion or two, you have kept them entirely to yourself.

HERMIT. Well, Freeborn take a cigar; you are near home, and for once in the way you may make holiday;

the northern lights will show you home, for the night is bright as silver. And as my countrymen propose staying another month with me, you will be better able to judge whether this evening's conversation may lead to our seeing you oftener.

FREEBORN. Agreed; I shall feel myself quite at home, since I know I shall not be putting you out of your usual way.

HERMIT. We were engaged in the history of Johanna Southcott yesterday: let us proceed to make a few observations on the most remarkable features, remembering always that she was set forth as a shadow of what the church was, is, and perhaps will be.

The three clergymen of the church who attached themselves to her, were Foley, Bruce and Webster, all learned and pious men. The first named, having satisfied himself of her real character, took her to his house, where she lived two years or two months, which of them I cannot now make out. She had of books only the bible in all this time, in which Foley was quite satisfied that her communications, impromptu, were from the Holy Ghost; they were as ready as the answers to Saul, by Samuel; 1 Samuel ix.

I must not here dwell on the particulars of her communications. She opens out, or rather the spirit in her, the promise to the woman in the fall, and shows, most beautifully, that although the price of the atonement has been fully paid, yet is the consummation of our redemption, by the extirpation of Satan from this world, yet remaining to be done by the unequivocal power only of the Lord of life, at his second advent. She was sent to instruct the church, of which she is a shadow, or personification, that our Lord waits only to have this promise claimed by the woman, the church, to fulfil it. Johanna taught us, or rather the Holy Spirit in her, how to pray for it, and much else that, if it could be attributed to the mere imagination or genius of an ignorant and illiterate woman, would be most miraculous, and quite shame the learned hierarchy, who have never equalled her expositions of scripture since the days when Satan introduced vain philosophy into the church, the shadow of that fruit by which our first mother fell.

She was made to select twelve witnesses, and these were called by name, to bear testimony to the world of the truth of her communications, &c. The clergymen were, I believe, three of them; one Elias Carpenter, was

one also under the character of Joseph. She had a service of worship I believe, daily, and on Sundays in a chapel in which Elias was the officiating minister. This man was a wholesalè paper manufacturer in a large establishment in Bermondsey, near London, at Mackinger house. He had bible reading and domestic prayers three times a day in his house, open to all who would; this man saw with pain that Johanna was but a woman, and that the flatteries and fancies of her numerous followers would lead to her downfall. He advised, he exhorted, and she became tired of a censor, and her advisers jealous of him. They deified their creature, the woman, until she quite forgot that she was but a shadow. She fancied *she* was the church in substance, and at length the identical woman in Revelations xii. which, indeed, is still an unsolved mystery.

We have, my friends, concluded from the history of the New Testament, that the initiation into the church was divided into two parts, of which our church makes one, viz: baptism, a sacrament, and the other confirmation, an apostolic institution. I speak of the Church of England, but we have concluded this last to be the formal baptism with the Holy Ghost, and the most essential part of initiation into the church. In the course of your preceding conversations, we have not spoken much on the other sacrament of the Lord's supper. I should like much to draw your attention to it. I have always thought that it was much mistaken in every way, and particularly in the fact that the clergy have monopolized to themselves the sole right to administer it, as they have properly done of the other; thence its desecration to idolatrous uses has necessarily resulted, and Satan has absolutely subverted its most comfortable use.

This abuse was rebuked (as I believe,) by the Holy Spirit, in a very particular way, as exemplified by Johanna.

When her followers were very numerous in London, the Spirit, by her, directed the holy supper to be commemorated. There arose a question whether it should be administered by the clergymen of the church only, or by Elias Carpenter, who was considered as being called to the ministry by the Spirit in Johanna; and there were some communications, which, whether divine or not, I assume to be so in this account; he was called in the character of Ezekiel, and often used this name to designate his office and character.

The question being put to the Spirit in Johanna, it was decided that it should be prepared and administered by both at different tables; but I believe the service was directed to be amended by a direct reference to the coming of our Lord, which, in our form is totally omitted now; and the followers, said at that time to be many thousands, were left free to receive it from which they pleased. Elias administered to two or three hundred communicants, and the Episcopally-ordained clergymen to about twenty or thirty.

If the spirit in Joanna be acknowledged to be divine, there can be no question but that the call of Elias was more unequivocal than that of the Episcopally-ordained ministers, whose call was assumed on their own word only, without other testimony. But Elias continued to administer this sacrament forty years nearly, five of which the spirit bore testimony to his divine commission continually by voice and vision, with some detailed instructions. So far as his being thus an acknowledged minister of God's word, it makes no difference in the monopoly of the administration of this sacrament by the priesthood. But I am constrained to confess that I have been and am still in some doubt whether this monopoly is authorized by scripture, admitting that the traditions of the church justify it, which I think they do. But if contrary to scripture, the tradition must be overruled. Let us examine. 1st, by analogy: the paschal lamb was prepared for those of a house or family, and if too much for one family, two or more might join. 2d, by the test of New Testament: "they went from house to house, breaking bread," &c. &c., viz. the disciples, who continued in the faith and doctrine of the apostles, I take this to be. 3d, in their lovefeasts they brake bread among one another, which led to irregularity and confusion. 4th, by reason; for this was the sign by which christians recognized each other, even at common meals, which is commemorated by our saying grace before meals. And our Lord himself was recognized by the disciples of Emmaus, in the breaking of the bread.

The question is, I am quite aware, open to various opinions. I do not mean to dwell on all that might be said; but in my judgment this ought to be done in remembrance of Christ's passion, at least once in every church congregation every Sunday, by the minister or elder, and at least the same in every christian family by father or master, and with every sick person, whether a minister be present or not, so long as two or three chris-

tians be assembled in the name of the Lord. I have said at least every Sabbath, for my opinion is that this should be done whenever the elements of bread and wine are before us for use.

The making a mystical ordinance of this sacrament, which led naturally to the idolizing the creative elements, appears to have been one of Satan's devices, and a masterpiece of art brought into use by the Gnostic puritans. The comparative degrees of sanctification of some members of Christ's body, the church, was evidently from the spirit of evil and division, not from the Holy Spirit of union in communion, which was in our Lord. This question, my friends, is open to you. The close communion of certain Calvinists, the refusal of the cup to the laity, the mystifying the sacrament by almost all, do appear to me to be Satanic errors; but the worship of the mass, like that of the brazen serpent in the days of Hezekiah, is absolute and unequivocal idolatry.

Tell me, Theophilus and Academicus, how you read this text: "Do this as oft as you drink it in remembrance of me." May it be transposed thus? "Do this in remembrance of me as oft as ye drink it."

THEOPHILUS. I confess I never considered the text, so transposed. In English, it seems that the transposition is admissible by the verbal structure, and so I think it is in the original Greek; and therefore, to obtain the true sense of our Lord's meaning, it must be considered in both ways, and my opinion is that the sense which may be deduced as agreeing with the present order of expression in our testaments, being also that which would result from transposing one member of the proposition, both agreeing, should in reason and common sense be adopted as the true sense; and therefore, "this do in remembrance of me as oft as ye drink it," expresses more unequivocally the sense of the command than that used, "this do as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

If this view were adopted, it would indeed occasion a complete revolution in holy communion by this sacrament, and would sanctify every act of social communion, and be a death blow to the Romish superstition of the mass, and to the fearful mystifications of this sacrament by many other sects. But the monopoly by the priests, (however ordained to their office,) in all sects maintained only, as it appears to me, on the authority of traditional usage in the church, rejects that reading altogether, which enjoins the commemoration of our Lord's death,

after every social meal, and denies that this solemn act should be as habitual as the morning, noon and evening sacrifices of old were; but only properly to be at stated times, and in the presence of the whole community, and in prescribed order. I really am at a loss how to judge. My reading would justify the daily and habitual act of commemoration, but if this were really intended, how came our forefathers not to have seen the truth? I should like your opinion, Hermit.

HERMIT. I am decided this ought to be done, and the other not left undone. I adopt both readings, and both modes of practice.

ACADEMICUS. Our host has an extraordinary tact at reconciling seeming contradictions, and he forces my convictions to yield up my disputatious spirit. And I cannot but see but that by adopting both readings, and thus not denying the full truth of either, we should at once destroy one main branch of spiritual despotism, the monopoly of this sacrament by the priesthood, and more would be done for the union of all sects in the true faith and profession of christianity in a few years of such practice, than in ages of our present practice. The christian system as established by the apostles, now, by Hermit's aid, opens out on me as perfectly simple, and perfectly consistent. They take care not to receive any one into the church without all reasonable human pledges for their faith and sincerity; but being once received, they become members of the body, and all holy, all saints, and are privileged by our Lord himself, to maintain full, free, unobstructed, habitual communion with him; yea, even familiar communion with all the saints, and with our good Lord always, at all times and in all places; and it is our bounden duty, and should be our pride and glory to remember his love and his death for us, in every act, in every moment of our lives.

THEOPHILUS. We need not prolong discussion on this point. One fact it is proper to remember, that the unrestrained and habitual use of this sacrament led to very serious abuses, and oftentimes to an awful desecration of it in the Corinthian church; which indeed may have been the cause of this undoubted privilege being withdrawn from the laity by the priesthood.

RUSTICUS. Come, gentlemen, I think you have now said quite enough on this subject. You have decided, I think, by analogy with the paschal supper, by the tests of scripture, by the practice of primitive christians, that



the monopoly of the sacred sacrament for commemorating our Lord's death until he shall come again, by the priesthood, is a usurpation, and has perverted its purpose, since the greater part of christians do never thus remember our Lord, and the priests quite neglect the great promise of our Lord at his death, in their forms of administration, so that it is now forgotten almost, and by many esteemed a heresy to entertain. I mean where our Lord says, "for as oft as ye do eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death, until he come." The last expression, "until he come," marks an event which is to close that manner of commemorating his death — even the (return) coming to be with us, to dwell among his own people, when being present, we remember his death and our affliction no more. It is no longer necessary, for we shall then enjoy him by perfect communion, &c. &c. I say this promise is totally overlooked by the usurping priesthood of every sect, which could not be the case were it the custom to repeat the words of Paul to the Corinthians, at all our common meals, with reverence and solemnity; but the institution of this sacrament by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are even more specific as to the promised return of our Lord, although I have ventured no comment on them.

I have taken leave thus to sum up what I understand we all agree in, on the subject of the monopoly and abuse of this sacrament, and hope we may now have the pleasure of hearing Hermit go on without interruption.

HERMIT. I thank you sincerely, Rusticus, for the deference you are pleased to express; but I assure you I am more pleased to hear than speak, and our friends Academicus and Theophilus are so ingenuous and candid in their remarks and disputation and discussions, too, that notwithstanding my long experience in the command of other men, I have been enabled to admire in them that art which few can acquire, that conquest which few can obtain, viz. self-command. In this art I would become their disciple.

ACADEMICUS. Fie! fie! Hermit, from any other than you, who have shown to us such admirable instances of forbearance, from any other than you we might take your eulogy as a compliment to which perhaps we had some claim; but from you it sounds something like sarcasm and irony. Mutual compliments among friends, are perhaps always superfluous, and very often dangerous to truth. Let us dispense with them.

FREEBORN. I like your talk much, but I agree with the young man who spoke last. I should have liked it much better without what our yankee folk call the soft soap. Why, we have many disputes of this sort among us, but we do n't smooth one another down like you and your new acquaintance, old man. When we dispute, we do dispute in earnest, and never give up a point as long as we can talk, and we are so much in earnest that you might suppose sometimes that we were going to eat one another; but our old man here has another way that we can't make out. He never contradicts people, yet he seems always in company to have it his own way. However, I like your talk, and think it almost as good as some of the stories in the newspapers, which serve to tickle the ears, whilst the mouth is occupied with a cigar.

HERMIT. Neighbor Freeborn, I have heard many disputations in this country which God Almighty has so blessed, and many very foolish ones. You, however, labor under a great mistake about these my worthy countrymen and myself. We are not disputing, we are seeking no preference, honor or credit, over each other. Our object is not victory, but truth by amicable discussion, in social communion or fellowship over our cigar and the log fire, and we think our conversations on the subject of religion, which should be most interesting to every man who seeks eternal life, as pleasant as those foolish ways of spending these long evenings, so common among the mass of mankind, who generally have no self-instruction in view, and amuse themselves with talking much, with no meaning, or sleeping away the time that might be much more profitably employed; and the soft soap you talk of, we use much as you do that of your wife's making, to clean off the filth, defilements and stains that by nature we are subject to, and to keep us in clean good humor, by endeavoring to think of each other better than we do of ourselves. In disputes, there must always be two sides, one opposed to the other, engaging us in a species of enmity which is devilish. In amicable debate, we are all on one side, united in pursuit of truth. Such union is angelic and heavenly. Having said so much, neighbor, about your soft soap, I will now give you an opportunity of doing us all a kindness, by telling us the little history of "the Amiable Ghost," Nelly Butler. I was in the middle of some account of an English woman, a prophetess, who lived in London principally from 1792 to 1814, and some other persons who were within that time favored with some revelation

from the world of spirits, viz., from our Lord, who is the ruler in heaven and in earth, however slow we may be to acknowledge this truth, that story of the English prophets may keep perhaps till after Christmas. As the wonderful tale of Nelly Butler bears directly on what we were talking about, namely, spiritual gifts, the gift of the Holy Ghost, I hope you will oblige us, and relate it as circumstantially as your memory will enable you.

FREEBORN. Why, now Mr. Hermit, you are getting serious. I should never have thought of telling these men a story of ghosts. I thought you did not believe in any such things, in England; for in general I have found that people from the old country set up a broad horse-laugh when such things are spoken of, which I must think is one of the devil's contrivances, for laughing the truth in holy things out of countenance, and by making people ashamed of it, putting it out of the world altogether. This, Hermit, I once heard you say, and have never forgotten it, for I believe it is God's truth.

ACADEMICUS. Mr. Freeborn, there are no infidels nor unitarians (in the sense generally understood) here. You may tell us any story you please, without any fear of being laughed at, although for my own part, I confess I am not very credulous; but I think the blessed spirit of truth so reigns in my conscience, that it will not permit me to reject as untrue any fact supported by unquestionable testimony. So pray, Mr. Freeborn, oblige us by proceeding if you please.

FREEBORN. Not far to the westward of this place, is the little village of Sullivan, in the county of Hancock, Maine. That village was the theatre of Nelly Butler's ghostly visitations, from about 1799, to 1806. She is known in the country by the name of the Blaisdell Ghost, because a family of that name seemed for a time to be the peculiar object of Nelly's visitations, and were supposed, and by many are still supposed, to have produced those appearances by art or witchcraft.

There was a very pious and very learned man named Alexander Cummings, an orthodox, or presbyterian minister, from 1806 to 1830, in this country, who used to go about doing good in his vocation, and who has written a little pamphlet in 1822, in which he has collected a vast body of evidence on the oaths of about thirty eye and ear witnesses, to prove the truth of many of the facts, from which I have been able to maintain a clearer recollection of them, and so clear and unequivocal is that testimony as

to the persons, the facts, the time and the place, that no man can doubt who has not the spirit of lying within himself, who will not believe though one rose from the dead. That pamphlet is still in existence. I have a mutilated copy, for it has passed through many hands, which I will send to Hermit for your satisfaction. It is prefaced by some philosophical and religious observations, and the facts are detailed in six letters, and the affidavits of the witnesses, many of whom are still living, and all are named, and some known to myself. Many of the witnesses, though agreeing in the facts, still maintain a perverse incredulity as to the appearances being supernatural; but cannot and do not pretend to find a reason for their unbelief, except this one: "We will not believe."

The story, in as few words as I can relate it, is this:

About the year 1796, a young woman named Nelly Butler, wife of Captain George Butler of Sullivan, died in child-bed, I believe. Her infant also died before herself, and was buried. She was not remarkable for a more serious turn of mind than others, but her life was moral. She was a daughter of Mr. Hooper.

Perhaps two or three years after, George Butler, her former husband, formed an attachment with Lydia Blaisdell of the same place, a worthy young woman. But his parents and hers were averse to their marriage, and they were made the victims of slander and malice, as is too often the case.

About the middle or latter end of 1799, the family of the Blaisdells were astonished and alarmed by the first visitations of the spirit of Nelly Butler. The family of the Blaisdells consisted of father and mother, I believe, and several children, mostly grown up. Mr. G. Butler's father was also alive, and he had other children. Mr. and Mrs. Hooper, and one sister of Nelly's were still living, and all in the village knew her when living. There were a number of pious good people in the village, and many not so. They appeared to have no regular minister of the gospel among them, and like most of the people in the country places, formed meetings or congregations, led by some of their more godly neighbors, and each did that in religious matters which seemed good in his own eyes.

Nelly's (viz. her ghost's) usual mode of visitation at the house of Mr. Blaisdell, was to announce her intended visit by knocking on the outside of the house, sometimes in one place, or in various parts at the same time.

She seldom became visible until invited, and her usual practice was not to speak until spoken unto, and she seemed careful not unnecessarily to alarm any one. Hers were all visits of love and good will, and those who desired not to see her she never appeared unto. She conversed freely, sometimes being visible in the form she had when living, and sometimes invisible. She appeared or took form sometimes in the midst of thirty or forty people, beginning in a very small spot of light, which gradually increased to the natural size of her person. She invited them to shake off all superstitious fear, to handle her, and feel that she had neither flesh nor bones. Some did so, and particularly her former husband, whose arm was seen at one time, in the cellar of Mr. B. and by thirty people, to pass through her form, and when in the midst of it, was illumined by her brightness, which also lighted the cellar, so that although every one assured himself of its being caused by no illusion or artifice, they saw the color of each others' and their own clothes. In short, all the painstaking that human wit or caution could take to detect any fallacy or deception, were taken and courted by the ghost of Nelly. She related various circumstances to her father, mother, sister and husband, and also to acquaintances, which none but they and herself knew, to assure them, and they were perfectly assured. She appeared by night and by day, in various houses and places, and in the open air, sometimes with a perfectly natural appearance, but generally as a luminous and semi-transparent body. In speaking, there was no appearance of breathing, and in moving from place to place, there was no walking motion, but her whole form moved at once. Her voice and speech were marked by all the peculiarities of those faculties when living. In short, none who then lived doubted but that her appearances were purely spiritual, or ghostly and angelical, but never with wings. Having premised so much, I may now proceed to the objects of her visits and her communications. The main object seemed to be to convince people of the mischievous tendency of the French philosophy, just then much in fashion, and to prove unquestionably the existence of a spiritual world, where the souls of just men made perfect, dwell with the Lord Jesus Christ, whose divine dominion in heaven and in earth she demonstrated; and whenever the name God was spoken, she added, "and our Lord Jesus Christ;" thus recalling his divinity to their recollection on every proper occasion.

Her first object was to assure Mr. Blaisdell that the marriage of his daughter to George Butler, her own former husband, was according to divine will, and could not be prevented. She comforted Lydia, his daughter, who appeared to be the object of her visit; she desired Mr. Blaisdell and Lydia, to see old Mr. Butler and his family, and she would appear to them altogether. She accompanied them, supporting Lydia, whose female nervousness led her on some occasions to faint, until she assured her that she should not faint again at her presence. But the prejudices of the parents on both sides, and of the parties themselves, owing to numerous slanders, were not finally overcome until after many visits and many predictions of future events, and those in distant parts, had confirmed the faith of all.

She was seen at one time in the midst of a very large assemblage, met for the purpose, in the house either of Blaisdell or Butler, with the spirit and form of her own infant in her arms, and assured them the body of her said infant would arise with her own at the resurrection, thus assuring them of this great truth.

But the most extraordinary appearance to my mind, was on an occasion when, no less than eighty persons being present, she cautioned them against levity and unbelief; and one Mr. Simpson, the leader of their meeting, being present, with whom she had much conversation of a religious nature, and who had questioned her particularly, whether she were from heaven or from below, and she satisfied him of her own spiritual identity by relating to him some conversations between them during her life, so that he doubted not. She then invited the eighty to form themselves in order, two and two, to sing a psalm, chosen by Simpson, and accompany her to the burial place of the village. This appears to have been in the evening, about twilight. They did so, as directed; and she led the procession, all singing the psalm. The grave-yard appears to have been less than a mile off. She assembled these eighty persons at the grave of her infant. Under her direction, the coffin and body was dug up, another grave for them was dug, about ten yards from the former, in which they (the coffin and corpse) were buried. Psalms were sung, I believe, during the whole ceremony, or perhaps with intervals; they then returned to the house in similar order. She remarked that God was a God of order, and was pleased with it.

To me, this appears to have been done to preserve a

striking memorial of her visitations to that and future generations, to confirm their faith in the spiritual appearance of the infant in her arms. There appears indeed, in Mr. Cumming's account, no sworn testimony that I recollect, of this procession, but of another of upwards of thirty persons, in open day, the ghost being with them, by the side of Lydia, mostly, but sometimes separate; there is full and ample testimony on oath, of many who formed parts in it.

At length George Butler and Lydia Blaisdell were married, and then she revealed to Lydia that she would have one child and then die.

Her visits were still continued for other objects, useless to recapitulate. Lydia Butler had one child and died. Nelly's ghost still was permitted to appear at times, and on being questioned whether she had ever appeared in spirit as then, elsewhere on earth, since her death, she answered she had, five times.

On one occasion when about thirty were present, in a cellar, she exhorted them all to a godly life, to read and study the Bible, and sung hallelujahs, the song of the blessed spirits, as related in John's vision of the revelations. She detained them until past day-light on Sunday morning, warning them to keep that day holy. The cellar door was thrown open for some time, and as she departed was seen to ascend, singing still loud hallelujahs in open day-light, about six o'clock, in August, 1800, I believe. She addressed herself particularly to the younger people in exhortations. She answered Mr. Simpson, that her conversion or change of heart, took place on her death-bed. That in the different religious sects there were good and bad. That the spirits of the good were received into the heavenly host at the death of their body, but of hell she spoke nothing. In answer to a species of exorcism by Simpson, who inquired whether she was from heaven or hell, she answered that she was from above, where she was employed with the angels, singing glory to the Lamb, and that she was in happiness, with the Lord. One having asked after his father who lived two hundred miles off, and the means of communication few and difficult, she answered that he was in heaven, singing the praises of the Lamb, with the angels. About a fortnight afterwards, the fact of his death was certified to have happened a few days previous to the announcement by the ghost.

These, gentlemen, are the facts as related, and well-

authenticated as any in the Bible, I believe, and so do all who lived at Sullivan then, and perhaps now. It is not more than fifty or sixty miles off, and may easily be visited to satisfy yourselves.

Mr. Cummings, it appears, was somewhat disposed to incredulity and was not there at the time of Nelly's usual visits. We may imagine that a man in his situation, who had written some very learned books, one on the second advent of our Lord, which Mr. Miller of New York, has lately announced is to happen in 1843, but which at that time, about 1800, was thought little of, and one on the Cherubim, which was full of Hebrew and Greek, — such a man would naturally be anxious to have full conviction by his senses, and no doubt made it the subject of his earnest prayers. In 1806, he was so favored. Nelly did appear to him in 1806, but he neglected to speak, therefore she did not. The appearance was unquestionable, in the open day. She was announced by a workman, when only in the form of a very small white cloud which advanced to within a few paces of where he, Cummings, stood watching her, and there the cloud developed into the woman's form and size. It seems that Mr. Cumming's doubts were all then removed, but the time of his collecting the evidence on oath, was not until 1818 or 1820. His book was published in 1822, but whether the copy I have is of the first or some later edition, I know not.

This is a summary of all I know about it: I knew Mr. Cummings well, and an uncle of mine, of a very reputable character, now alive, one Samuel Ingoll, was one of the sworn witnesses: he has often spoken of it, and so you may now dispute about, or discuss it, as you like, but I have no doubts whatever on my mind, of the facts which I have mentioned.

HERMIT. Many thanks, my good neighbor; you have told me the story so well that you have hardly left us a word to say on it. Will you take any thing else? your sleigh will be here in a minute or two. We have kept you past your time, but I trust your wife will not be uneasy.

FREEBORN. Oh no, Hermit, she knows you, and knows I am here. Well gentlemen, I wish you good night; hope to be better acquainted with you yet, before spring comes.

ALL. Good night, Mr. Freeborn, hope you will come again soon



## SIXTEENTH CONVERSATION.

*Theophilus, Rusticus, Academicus, and the Hermit, as usual.*

HERMIT. Freeborn's story of Nelly's ghost, filled up our time well last night, and now we are on the subject of apparitions from the spiritual world, I may as well carry it on by a little story of Freeborn himself, to the purpose.

When he was a younger man, for he is now little more than fifty years old, he was a free-thinking infidel. He thought himself clever and wise: he was, and is, a very sober man, and industrious, and his worldly affairs have thriven beyond his hopes; he is therefore well to do.

One morning, about eleven o'clock, he set out to go to the sea-side, where he had some business. His nearest neighbor on the road was about two miles off. When near his neighbor's place, and before he had issued from a path in the wood, he saw his neighbor, whose name I know not, walking towards his own house, from the opposite direction, open the door, enter, and shut it after him. His family were all women.

Freeborn passed on to the sea-side, about two miles farther, saw a fishing boat row to the shore, and the first man who landed was his said neighbor. Astonished, he said nothing; but in two hours, as he passed on his way homeward, he called into his neighbor's house, and asked his wife and mother, who had called there at eleven o'clock? Both women assured him that no man had entered the house since the husband left it, the day before, and they supposed he had been out fishing all night, as was the fact. Freeborn says he never told this story to any one but myself, and that he would have sworn to the identity of the man, and the fact of having seen him enter his house, without hesitation; and that he knew him as well as he ever knew any man. Now the use he made of the phenomenon appears to me to have been a correct one; he began to think more seriously of religion, he found nothing was impossible with God, and he began to doubt, that he himself was neither so wise nor clever as he had fancied, for he was sure of the truth of his vision, and yet the fact was much more beyond the comprehension of his reason, in every way, than any thing in the Bible, and from that time he has become a deep thinking man, has studied his Bible, and is very religious, but is

unfortunately for his earthly comfort, not generally believed to be so.

Of the various apparitions, ghosts, goblins, dreams, visions, and other modes of communication from the spiritual world, with this physical atom, or the beings upon its surface, I need not speak; these examples are from our present neighborhood, and need no reflections other than passed on their recital. I shall now proceed with some of Joanna's communications, which have all the external marks of true revelations from our Lord himself, but first will support the probability of Freeborn's own story, by relating one of many experienced in the life of Elias Carpenter.

Before his attachment to Joanna, whom, because of the prejudice of the hierarchy against her name and mission, he sometimes in his writings, which are few, calls Noadiah; and if her spiritual communications were to be republished, I am now inclined to adopt this assumed name, with the others of Thomas, for Thomas Dowling, or Dowland, favored with many dreams, visions, and messages from the spiritual world in his ear; deaf to human voice. Joseph for the name of Henry Prescott, a lad taken from the workhouse, endowed with an extraordinary sense of spiritual sight and hearing, with a tact for drawing, a gift also, by which he was directed often to draw representations of his own vision, which were supernaturally repeated for the purpose. His name was changed to Joseph in obedience to angelic message. Elias' name was changed to Ezekiel, and he assumed E. P. G., as the initials of Ezekiel, Paul, Gabriel, whose offices, he presumed, he was ordained to enact as the minister of the house of God, in Amelia-street, Walworth. James was also the prophetic name of Joseph Foss Dession, a master in the navy, and an elder or witness in the said church, and now its minister.

Before his (Elias') attachment to Joanna's cause, as divinely commissioned by our Lord, of which he had full conviction and assurance, by spiritual communications, through Thomas and Joseph, addressed to himself, he had been sincerely attached to the church at Lambeth or Bermondsey. The curate was his particular friend, but mad, at the presumption of Noadiah for supposing herself a prophetess, and with Ezekiel for his folly in believing her, he vented his spleen in some profane blasphemies, and some violences. One evening, on his return home from a party, he knocked at his own door: when the maid opened it, he saw his own figure, or a spiritual

likeness of himself, seeming in body, walk into the house and proceed up stairs: he asked the servant who that was that passed her and went up stairs; she insisted that no person had entered but himself. He followed his shade, and never came down stairs again alive, but died within a few days. Whether this circumstance were authenticated by any tangible evidence I know not; it is related by Ezekiel, and he appears to have been by no means a man afflicted by simple credulity, but a strictly true man.

Now my friends, you may decide how much of these circumstances that we have had before us, as being supposed to result from the operations of the holy almighty Spirit of our gracious Lord, so far as they may affect our faith and works, — how far, I say, they may result from true religion, or from superstition. I think I set out by defining my mark for discrimination: whatever is indeed true, the results, duly and truly, from it must be true in all things; in spiritual things, this is true religion; superstition, on the contrary, is always founded in falsehood, or from false conclusions, or deductions from facts that may or may not be true in themselves.

The fact of Samuel receiving communications in his ear, and by some internal mode, as 1 Sam. ix. 10, no man doubts; and our religion is founded on similar facts, as to the prophets and apostles, and primitive christians. We believe this true, and our religion is founded on it. Noadiah, lady Jane Lead, Jonah, or Brothers, Thomas, Joseph, and various others, have shown abundant proofs that they have had similar communications from the same Holy Spirit. Our parsons and many others, choose to say, they do not and will not believe it, and it is by most men called superstition. We are the subjects of an irrational sort of logomachy, or arbitrary use and misuse and abuse of words, as has been shown of the word person, which we have borrowed from another language, and have by abuse changed its original meaning, although we retain it in many of its derivatives; as the word personification, for example, its meaning is seldom mistaken, and so of the metaphors and other personifications used in scripture, some of which have been discussed.

I do not think we need say more on spiritual gifts. But as Noadiah affirms and has given evidence that she had the gifts of the Holy Spirit, by spiritual communications, which she was commanded to write, I propose that Rusticus read us one of her Essays in explanation of the

Bible, and Theophilus, Academicus, and myself, remark on them as we proceed. They are all, that is, her Bible readings, as commented on and explained by the Holy Spirit, very instructive and interesting, and as I have said, quite shame our bishops and priests, whose worldly wisdom and spirit fall so far short.

RUSTICUS. I will perform the part you have assigned me gladly, for I confess you have raised my curiosity, and created a strong desire in me to see some of that extraordinary woman's productions.

Academicus, and Theophilus and self will as gladly, for the same reason, profit by the license given us; however, Hermit, I have a question to propose before we begin with Noadiah. To-morrow will be Christmas-eve Is that really the anniversary of the birth of the Saviour of the world, or rather of his human birth? The world, or rather Christendom, takes it for granted, but we have no accounts of it in the scriptures, or in the Fathers, that I remember: it wants one of Leslie's marks, which would have rendered the authenticity of the fact unquestionable as to the time, if the feast by which it is commemorated had been appointed and kept within his own lifetime; but that seems decidedly not to have been the case. The season, I think, invites us to consider this subject, although it does not now appear that the precise date does involve any other material circumstance of our faith and doctrine. I feel curious to know whether the birth of the "desire of all nations," was not marked by some marvellous coincidences in time, as well as place, interesting to the whole world as well as to the Jews.

HERMIT. It is indeed a question that cannot fail, I should think, to be most interesting to any man who is a christian, who really loves the Lord, who has condescended, not only as he is our natural father by creation, but as our spiritual father, to adopt us as his own peculiar children, by love, and his own most Holy Spirit, and thus regenerating us, or begetting us to eternal life, and to the inheritance which he has provided for his own children, who really do love, honor, and obey him with true filial affection and reverence. Even on this earth, when he shall have put out from it all evil, and the author of it, and have restored it to the same state of purity and holiness, as it was when first put out of his hands at the creation, when God said that it was very good; when by his Holy Spirit he shall have perfected the moral creation, within the six thousand years typified by the six days of the physical creation, then will he re-

move the curse, with Satan and sin ; then, my friends, shall we behold him as he is now, in the glorious majesty of the eternal Almighty, and with his every name. Who can contemplate these blessed and glorious promises without being deeply interested in every circumstance of the life, in human flesh, as the Father, the Brother, the Friend, the Saviour, the Redeemer, and the Almighty God of this our Lord Jesus Christ ?

I do not know what has occurred on this subject in the early days of christianity, but in these latter times, one Mr. Kennedy, and after him a Mr. F. Penrose, of Plymouth, a gentleman, have undertaken to fix the chronology of the world by two unerring principles,—the word of God in the scriptures, and the known periods of the motions of the heavenly bodies.

Their rules are most simple, and their modes of calculation quite within the ability of any one who has been instructed in the four fundamental operations of arithmetic. Having thus introduced my authorities, I think, Academicus, you will rather use them than trust to my memory. I will thank you to take a candle, step into the library, and you will find an octavo volume, labelled Penrose's Philosophy and Astronomy ; be good enough to bring it here, and I will point out where you may read what he has said on this very subject, for our instruction. Academicus having procured the book, Hermit pointed out the place : he read as follows, beginning at page 40.

“ After the Exodus of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt, they kept their feast of Tabernacles and In-gathering, according to Moses' direction, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, (Leviticus xxiii. 39,) as they do to this day.”

“ It is worthy of observation, says Mr. Kennedy, that when the Jews celebrate the feast of the tabernacle as above directed, in remembrance of the creation of the world, which they never fail to do at the appointed season, they celebrate at the same time not only the birthday of the world, but of the promised Messiah too, who was born on the first day of the feast of the tabernacles, and circumcised on the eighth or great day of the same.”

HERMIT. My friend Academicus, I would observe here, on this great day of the feast, it must not be confounded with the great day of atonement, on the tenth day of the same month, for that was the great feast. There is in these speculations a wonderful field opened for research ; for such an indulgence we shall not, I fear,

find sufficient leisure. I have interrupted you, to say, that I do not quite deliver myself into Mr. Kennedy's hands without reserve, but in truth his hypothesis is beautiful, and the coincidences he notices are wonderful. Thus he has by scripture data only, found the precise times of most of the remarkable events recorded, of the creation, the flood, the birth of John Baptist, of Jesus Christ, his death, &c. &c. It is really a very important book, that of Mr. Kennedy: but pray proceed with Penrose. Academicus continues to read: "But as this season of the year is contrary to the received opinion, when Christ was born, I shall endeavor to find the real and true season when that happened. In order to do this, let us examine the scriptures; for when this is done carefully, with a good intention, and aided by the Holy Spirit, we often find they contain more than we expected." "It is generally agreed that the ceremonies and works of the law were typical of those things which were fulfilled in the gospel, both testaments being counterparts to each other, as our Saviour told the Jews.' "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; they are which testify of me; if ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me." "That the temple typified the body of Christ, we are certain; for our Lord himself told us so. The feast of dedication of Solomon's temple, was kept on the feast of the tabernacles in the seventh month, and on the eighth day they made a solemn assembly, for its dedication. If this was a type of Christ, no doubt it was fulfilled in its antitype." St. Luke tells us, "That in the days of Herod the king of Judea, that a certain priest, named Zecharias, of the Course of Abia: and it came to pass that as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, that he departed to his own house, and that after those days Elizabeth his wife conceived, and hid herself five months. And in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin, and said unto her, Behold! thy cousin Elizabeth, she has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month with her."

In order to know the season of the year when this happened, Luke tells us that it was directly after Zecharias' days of ministration were accomplished, and that Zecharias was of the Course of Abia. And in Chronicles we are informed that Abia belonged to the eighth course. Now the priests began these courses of ministration after the sabbath was over which followed the

Passover, that is, our Easter Sunday. During the week of Passover, all the courses of the priests ministered together. That the beginning of the fifty days between the feast of Passover and the feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, was to commence on the morrow after the Sabbath (Easter Sunday,) when the wave sheaf was offered, so that the first course were to begin their ministration on the second sabbath after the Passover, (or first Sunday after Easter ;) hence the course of Abia did not come on until the week after Pentecost, and the end of his ministration was twelve weeks after Passover-day, for the conception of Elizabeth, and his birth must have been about the time of the Passover in the succeeding year, and our Lord's birth six months' later, or at the feast of the tabernacles, or about the fifteenth day of the seventh month. So that John Baptist was born on, or about, the Passover-day, or fifteenth of the first month, and our Lord, on or about the fifteenth day of the seventh month.

Here follows some calculations to prove that our Saviour was born on the first day of the feast of the tabernacles, in the twenty-sixth year of Augustus, on a Sunday, answering to the first sabbath after the creation, in the year of the world 4005.

HERMIT. If we were very fastidious, we might question the precise days of the birth of both John and Jesus. But assuming the analogies of God's providence with scriptural chronology and the scriptural calendar, the coincidences here assumed do seem to me fair, reasonable, and according to the analogy of faith.

I think, Academicus, what you have read will satisfy you, and we have a custom in commemorating the birth of the Saviour, which marks the epoch by more decided testimony than the calculations, viz., all Christendom dresses the houses and churches with boughs and branches (we with evergreens) on that day, which is direct evidence that that event happened at the feast of the tabernacles.

It is rather curious that christians have no feast corresponding to this great feast of the Jews, and indeed of the gentiles, for I believe this was a feast kept by all nations as commemorative of the creation, but this feast has slipped to our Christmas, three months later. Penrose has well accounted for this. But we may, I think, offer a suggestion on it, as a time which the prophecies predict as to be the great feast in the glorious dispensation, we look for under our Lord's own personal reign

on earth, when sin and Satan shall have no place there. If the camp meeting revivals, so notorious in the United States, were fixed for that time of the year, to embrace the whole period of the feast trumpets and of tabernacles, it might become a very interesting time. I but start this suggestion for the consideration of our future leisure, and for such of our friends who are in the ministry, who are attached to the system of revivalism.

These conversations, my friends, were commenced rather as an introduction to the subject in better form and order, and you, my friends, Academicus and Rusticus, have been so kind as to keep your notes of the observations which we have severally made, and as these notes have now swelled to the size of a good pamphlet, I propose that Academicus shall revise them, and let them pass through the press. It may awaken better wits.

Our second course of conversation, I propose beginning immediately, and to apply to the near approach of the second coming of our Lord, in the glorious majesty of the Eternal Almighty.

THEOPHILUS. We are all too much obliged to you, my good friend Hermit, for giving a sort of consistency to conversations that would otherwise have evaporated into empty air. I can only offer my best aid, to fulfill your suggestion as to the past conversations, and to prepare for those you are good enough to engage us for on the expected second advent of our Lord.

END OF THE SIXTEENTH CONVERSATION.

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ACADEMICUS. If it be the Lord's will that I be enabled to continue an account of these conversations, and the public will take such an interest in them as may pay for the printing, I hereby engage myself to undertake the task of their collection.

ACADEMICUS.

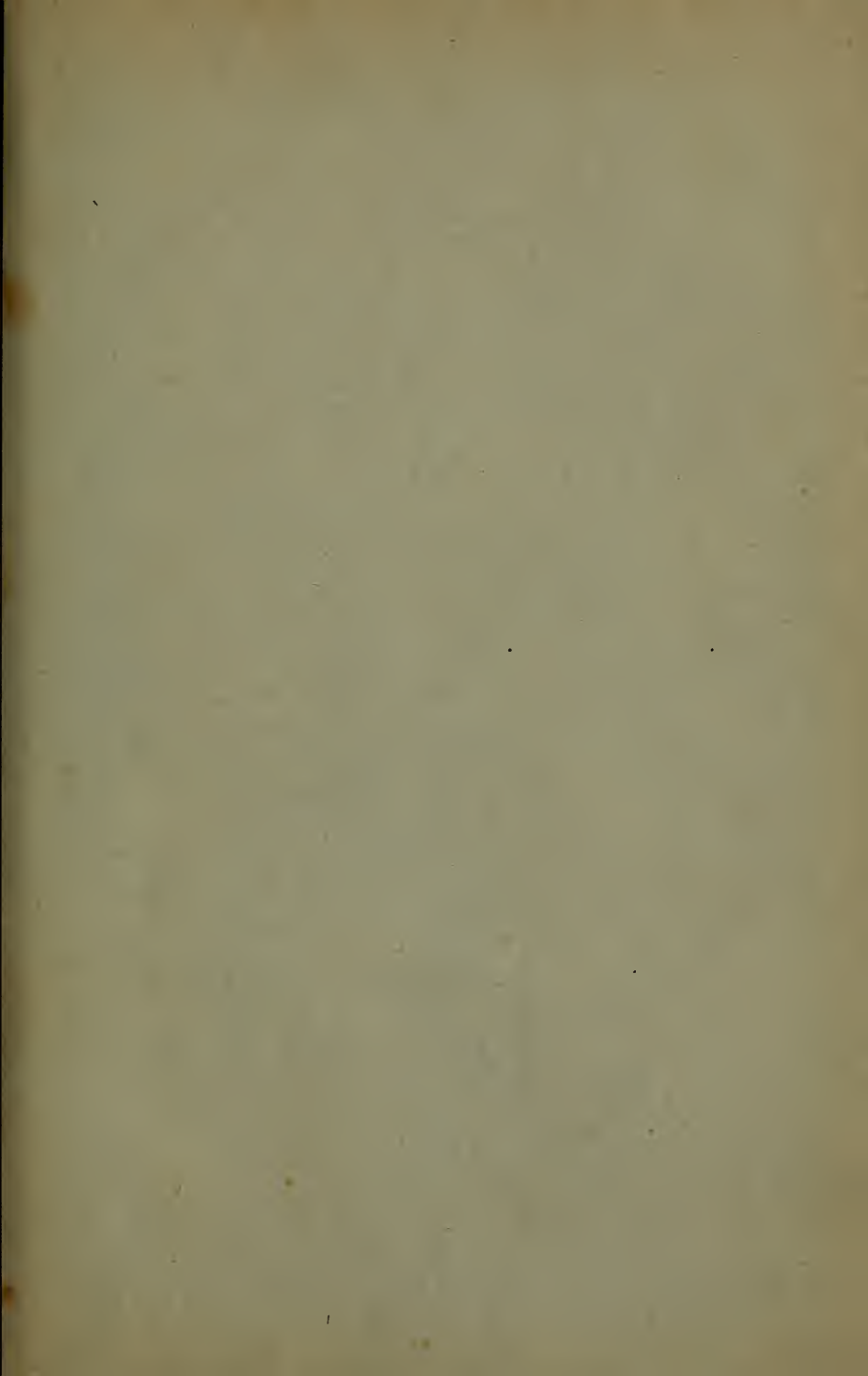


## E R R A T A .

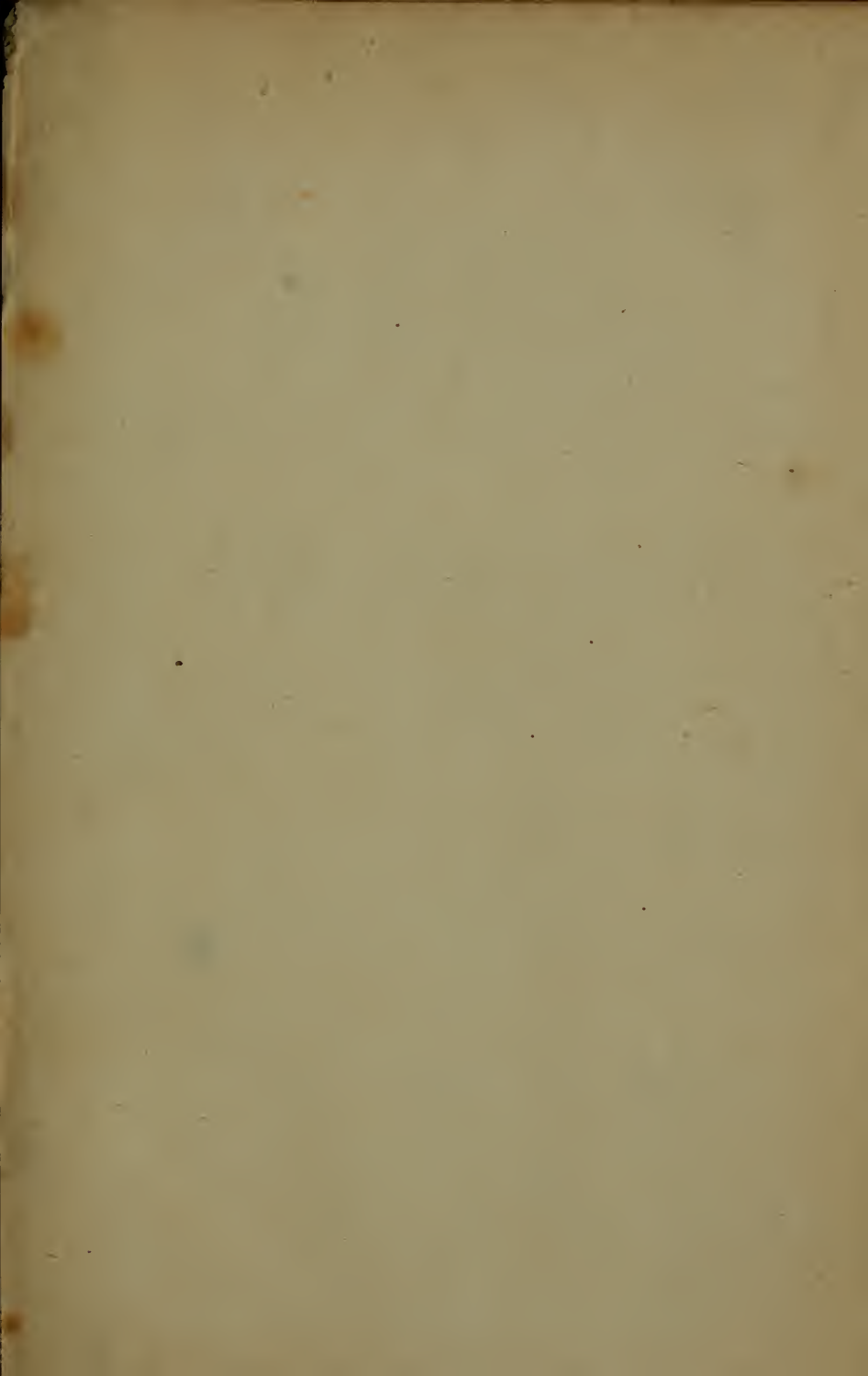
- Page 5, 14th line from the bottom, dele the last *comma* in the line.  
 7th line from the bottom, dele the first *two commas*.
- Page 8, 27th line from the top, insert *as* after *is*.
- Page 9, 9th line from the bottom, for *is* read *in*.  
 11th line from the bottom, after *avert* insert *them*.  
 12th line from the bottom, dele *against*.  
 14th line from the bottom, for *evils* read *wiles*.  
 22d line from the bottom, for *same* read *sane*.
- Page 10, 3d line from the top, for *ciadas* read *ciadas*.
- Page 16, 15th line from the top, insert *of* after *many*.
- Page 23, 8th line from the top, for *masturbation* read *mastipation*.
- Page 27, 7th line from the bottom, for *exceed* read *excel*.
- Page 28, 3d line from the bottom, before the word *in* insert a *comma* or the word *and*.
- Page 28, 9th line from the bottom, for *venial* read *venal*.
- Page 30, 24th line from the top, for *vices* read *vice*.
- Page 33, 23d line from the top, insert *the* after *of*.
- Page 35, 5th line from the bottom, for *one* read *our*.
- Page 36, 12th line from the bottom, read *seems to us essential to person, viz. a body*.
- Page 37, 6th line from the bottom, after the word *Trinity* subjoin as follows: *announced, and its operations in the creation in all its three characters, in these three verses, besides announcing the existence of evil, by its symbol, darkness*.
- Page 41, 17th line from the top, after *Jacob* insert the word *who*.
- Page 44, 2d line from the top, for *assures* read *assure*.
- Page 49, 8th line from the bottom, for *alliance* read *counsellor, friend, ally, partner or spouse*.
- Page 50, 15th line from the top, for *on* read *in*.  
 16th line from the top, for *exercises* read *exercise*.  
 25th line from the top, after *ground* suppress the *period*.  
 26th line from the top, after *later* make the *period* a *colon*.
- Page 58, 13th line from the top, erase *Academicus*. (It is Theophilus who speaks, but addressing Academicus in particular.)
- Page 67, 11th line from the top, insert *it* before the word *seems*.
- Page 81, 9th line from the top, for *man* read *mean*.
- Page 83, 4th line from the bottom, for *Agalus* read *Agabus*.
- Page 85, 6th line from the top, for *corinthian* read *cerinthian*.  
 28th line from the top, for *Bockman* read *Behman*.
- Page 92, 13th line from the bottom, for *Acts II.* read *Acts I*.
- Page 95, 20th line from the bottom, for *promised* read *premised*.
- Page 109, 4th line from the top, after *recorded* insert *comma*.  
 5th line from the top, after *testaments* insert *comma*.  
 6th line from the top, after *ordinances* insert *comma*.  
 14th line from the top, after *else* insert *semicolon*—after *Cornelius* erase the *comma*.
- Page 111, 20th line from the top, insert *if* before *then*.
- Page 116, 6th line from the bottom, for *presumptuous men* read *presumption of the men*.

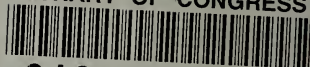
ERRATA.

- Page 124, 12th line from the top, insert *and* after *opening*.
- Page 125, 26th line from the top, for *signification* read *significative*.
- Page 134, 10th line from the bottom, for *them* read *you*.
- Page 137, 24th line from the bottom, for *It is* read *Is it*.  
21st line from the bottom, for *semicolon* put *interrogation*.
- Page 138, 3d line from the bottom, for *imitated* read *united*.
- Page 140, 11th line from the top, at the end of the line insert *period*.  
12th line from the top, after *itself* expunge *period*.
- Page 141, 13th line from the top, after *Lord* expunge *semicolon*.  
13th line from the top, after *them* for *comma* put *semicolon*.  
15th line from the top, for *our Lord* read *one Lord*.
- Page 144, 9th line from the top, for *word* read *words*.
- Page 148, 2d and 3d line from the bottom, for *prom-ed* read *promised*.
- Page 150, 14th line from the top, for *satan* read *Satan*.
- Page 151, 6th line from the top, for *there* read *their*—for *acknowledge* read *acknowledged*.
- Page 151, 11th line from the top, insert *comma* after *education*.  
12th line from the top, insert *comma* after *knowledge*.
- Page 154, bottom line, insert *comma* after *I AM*.
- Page 159, 1st line from the bottom, for *an* read *in*.
- Page 163, 20th line from the top, add a note. *Brothers recovered his reason, after he was liberated, and deeply deplored his errors; but still affirmed his prophetic mission in the character of Jonah, to warn the British Nation of the approach of our Lord in his second Advent Glory.*
- Page 165, 18th line from the top, insert *semicolon* after *hypocrites*.
- Page 168, 22d line from the top, for *more* read *mere*.
- Page 170, 21st line from the top, erase the word *in* and insert *comma* before *doggerel*.
- Page 175, 5th line from the top, for *Mackinger* read *Neckinger*.
- Page 176, 6th line from the top, for *two or three* read *seven*.  
10th line from the bottom, for *of* read *at*.









## HYMN.

On I listen to His Father's voice,  
 And to His own decree  
 Awake I walk with His God mine  
 The world is you must see.

Return to you, O God, my God,  
 His pardon and His grace;  
 Both Jews and Gentiles I have  
 O Forgiveness, O my grace.

Then supplicate you, O God,  
 Nor let him call in vain,  
 His heavenly kingdom's coming down,  
 His Paradise again.

Then all ye all say "My God and King,  
 Thy goodness who art here;  
 "Oh, Thou, dear God, who art above,  
 "and govern all below.

"Thy kingdom come—Thy will be done,  
 "As earth resemble heaven;  
 "Oh, ye all, O Spirit God,  
 "Be ye by us for ever."